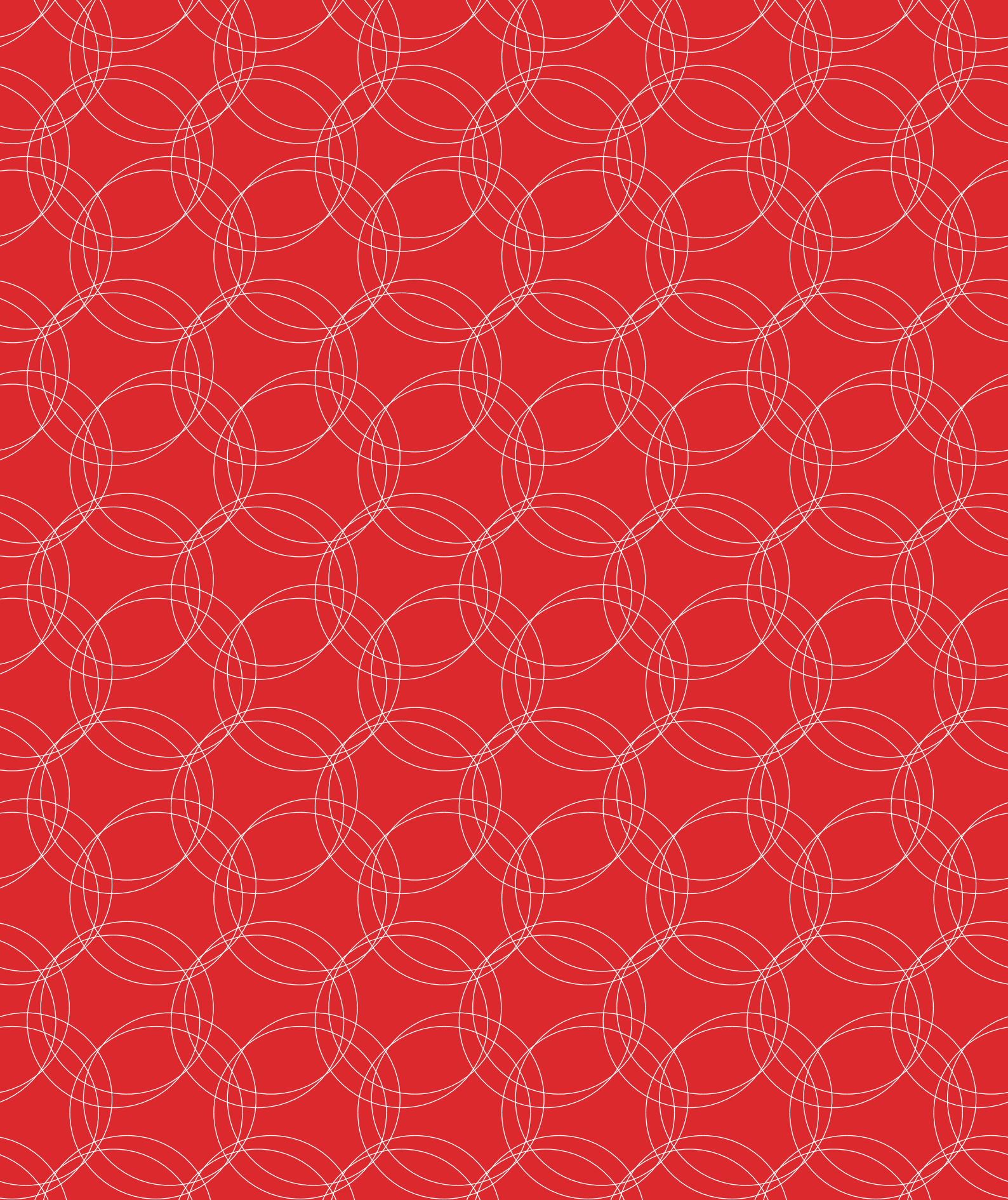
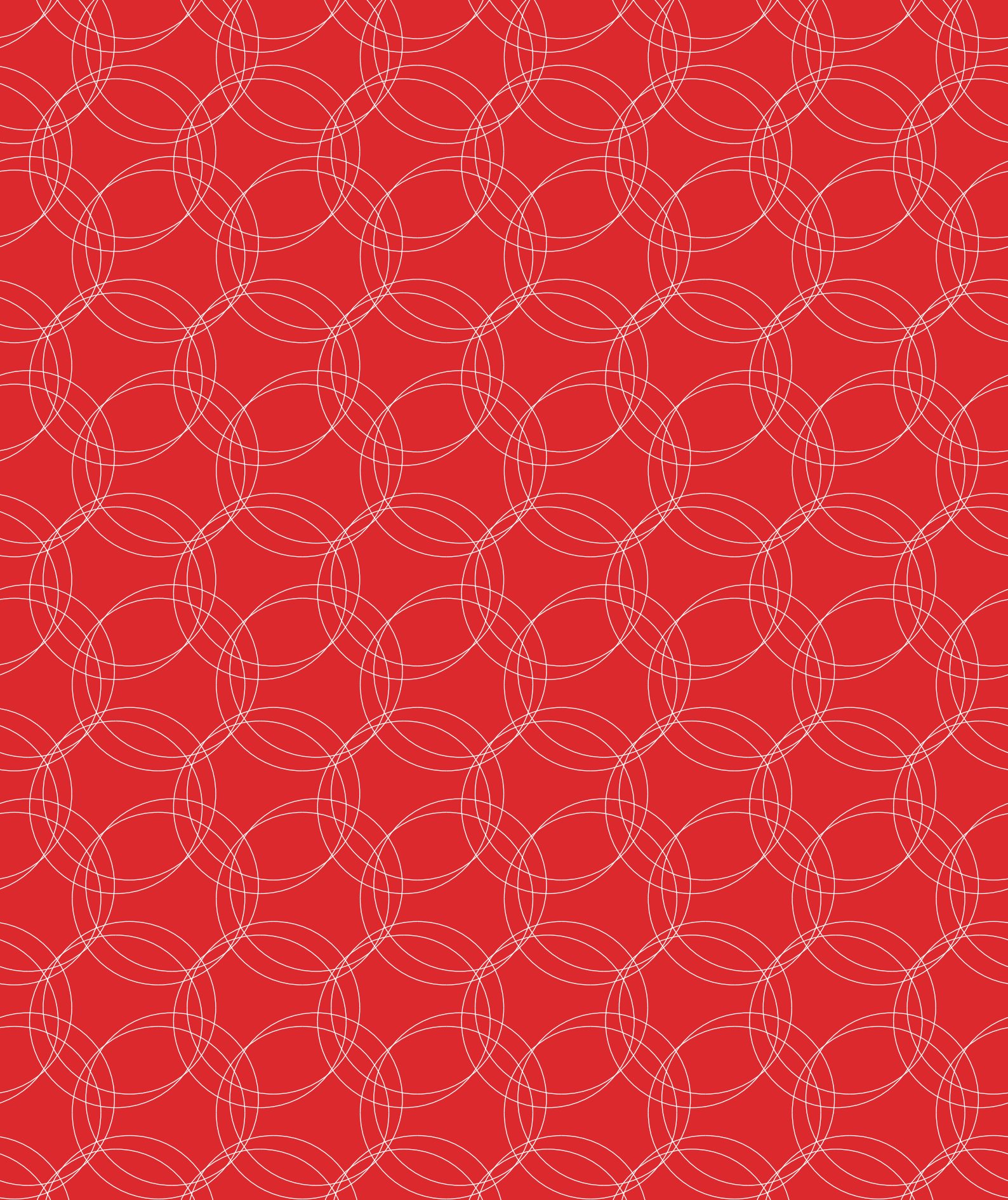




**Joint and double
studies**
— **in Poland and
the world**

NAWA
POLISH NATIONAL AGENCY
FOR ACADEMIC EXCHANGE





Joint and double studies — in Poland and the world

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Foreword

DR DAWID KOSTECKI

Director of the Polish National Agency
for Academic Exchange



The academic world is undergoing dynamic transformation caused by numerous external and internal factors. In response to contemporary challenges, the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA) strives, among other things, to provide attractive forms of academic mobility. One of the well-established solutions are programmes that enable students to obtain double or joint degrees. This is a most relevant challenge in the context of the internationalisation of Polish science.

Considerations regarding the need to develop innovative solutions have resulted in a publication titled *Joint and double studies. Poland and the world*. Across almost 180 pages, experts – both theoreticians and practitioners – take up the issue of running study programmes that enable students to obtain a joint or double degree.

It should be noted that although the concept of a double or joint degree has been widely known in subject literature since the 1970s, the matter has not been sufficiently explored in Poland. The present book is intended to bridge this research gap. It has to be highlighted, however, that this type of education has gained interest in the Polish academic community in recent years. Indubitably, the Katamaran programme held by NAWA since 2019 has contributed to this improvement. The programme's coordinators have been willing to share their experiences and reflections in the present volume.

The book does not merely enumerate institutions which run programmes that offer the opportunity to obtain a double degree. Theoretical and practical considerations are complemented with the results of empirical studies: a survey carried out by NAWA in April and May 2021 as well as a pilot

study from June 2020. A total of 127 HEIs took part in the survey, including 36 vocational HEIs, 17 universities, 16 technical HEIs, 13 economics HEIs, 11 art HEIs, 7 medical HEIs, 6 physical education HEIs, 6 teaching HEIs, 3 HEIs of the Ministry of National Defence or the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, 3 agricultural HEIs, 2 theological HEIs, and 7 HEIs of other types. This pioneering and methodologically holistic research approach adds an undeniable cognitive value to the work.

The surge of interest in double degree opportunities is driven also by the complexities of the labour market. Flexibility is a key value that increases a graduate's employability not only at home but also abroad. A double degree is an important step in building a candidate's career path not only because of the opportunity to broaden their horizons, but also in terms of fostering their openness to the world.

The Covid-19 pandemic affected students, researchers, and higher education institutions. It was an extremely challenging time in academic life both nationally and internationally. This publication attests that universities and research institutions have coped with the challenge that the pandemic time brought in terms of building cooperation with foreign partners. The concept of the global village coined by Herbert Marshall McLuhan has made itself felt with redoubled

force. The world has shrunk considerably in recent years. Today, we face common challenges and common problems – but also have common opportunities. One of the opportunities that are the consequence of the shortening of the distance between the different regions of the world in the area of education are studies that offer double degrees.

Examples from around the globe are an important part of the book. The publication shows the diversity of educational solutions resulting from various teaching traditions, study systems, or legal regulations in which universities and research institutes exist in countries such as the United States, Germany, Norway and Hungary.

Last but not least, although some of the research theses presented in the volume may seem rather bold, and even controversial, I am convinced that scientific progress can only be made through creative intellectual discourse. I can only encourage you to engage in polemics and a lively discussion.

Introduction

DOROTA PIOTROWSKA

PHD, BENG, PROFPL

Lodz University of Technology

Polish higher education has for many years been characterised by great creativity and openness to the creation of new qualifications. The amended *Law on Higher Education*, which came into force in 2011, gave universities the right to autonomously define standards for new qualifications, and the National Qualifications Framework facilitated the comparability of qualifications across Europe.

The first double degree agreements were signed by Polish universities at the beginning of the 21st century. The basis for awarding the qualification was at that time the confirmation of completion by the student of a specified number of hours of classes as set out in the standard for a given field of study. The axis of the defined programme, and consequently the basis of the awarded qualification being the subject of a given double degree agreement, was the framework content of education, divided into core subjects and particular majors. It was a content-oriented system that treated the role of learning outcomes very marginally. The agreements signed specified in detail the names of specific subjects and programme content, together with the compulsory number of teaching hours allocated to them.

Dr Piotrowska is a researcher and academic teacher at the Lodz University of Technology. She also acts as Director of the Centre for International Cooperation of the Lodz University of Technology and serves as the plenipotentiary of the Rector of the Lodz University of Technology for internationalisation. As part of her academic activities, she focuses on introducing innovations focused on modern learning methods, quality assurance systems, double degree agreements and broadly understood internationalisation initiatives. In her research activities, she has carried out and supervised a number of projects devoted to strategic management in higher education institutions, change management at universities and the implementation of lifelong learning strategies. She has carried out a number of projects and pilot implementation studies related to the development of modern learner competences, in line with the most recent needs of the economy and the labour market.



The following years (2005 and 2008) saw the active implementation of the Bergen Communiqué and the start of work on the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework. The formal introduction of the qualifications framework to the higher education system in Poland took place with the adoption of the Act amending the Law on Higher Education on 18 March 2011. It was a breakthrough moment for the development of higher education in Poland. It has also played an important role in the process of awarding joint/multiple qualifications by higher education institutions in Europe. Since then, the university has been able, relatively freely, to define educational programmes (now: study programmes) and

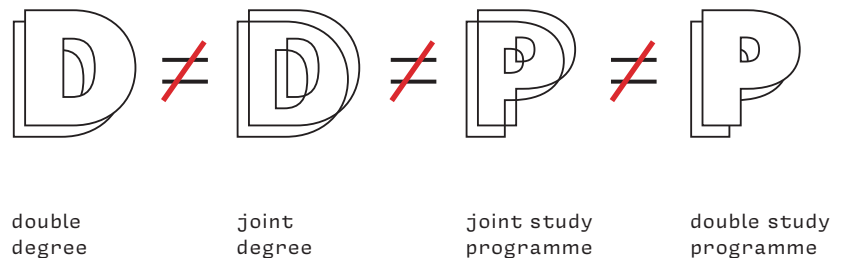
describe them using the language of educational outcomes (now: learning outcomes). This approach to the creation of new qualifications / study programmes has opened up new possibilities for Polish universities to define an individualised educational offer according to their specific characteristics. It also enabled the establishment of a process for identifying partner universities with similar characteristics and specialisations. Universities were able to start building educational models based on their own research experience and thus establish a completely new type of cooperation based on complex research and teaching components. At that time, there was a gradual increase in the integration of research infrastructure into the educational process and a much more rational use of scientific equipment previously used mainly for research grants. All these activities and the mechanisms implemented have definitely brought the universities closer together, strengthening the relationship between the partners and laying the foundations for a strongly established strategic relationship.

In view of such advanced relational processes, it was impossible not to develop closer forms of cooperation also in the field of the university's didactic activity. An expression of this strengthening of relations has been the dynamic increase in the number of double/joint degree agreements signed.

This publication attempts to bring together the experiences of many Polish universities and systems from other countries in this area. The issue of double/joint degrees is extremely complex. The first thing that comes to the fore is a kind of terminological confusion resulting from the lack of a clear definition and differentiation of the terms on the basis of which universities around the world operate when defining their qualifications. This is a confusion that has somewhat blocked universities in Europe for many years. The lack of order causes universities to use some terms interchangeably, which sometimes gives rise to misunderstandings.

This publication has no ambition to introduce a structured terminology structure. Its overriding aim is to present the many good practices that Polish universities successfully implement on a daily basis. NAWA's intention is to provide a reliable source of inspiration that will allow other Polish universities to gain new ideas for developing their educational activities.

A detailed analysis of the different types of solutions presented in the book shows that for most cases, the following equation can be said to be true:



The **double degree** is treated in the vast majority of universities as the issuance of two separate documents confirming the formal completion of the educational process described in a given study programme. This approach is not entirely consistent with the definition of qualifications adopted in the *Act on the Integrated Qualifications System (IQS)*¹. As Tomasz Saryusz-Wolski rightly observes in his text, according to the definition of a qualification, “a degree is a confirmation of the learning outcomes included in its standard, i.e. in the case of higher education in the description of the study programme. It is therefore not an acknowledgement of the completion of a learning process, but an acknowledgement of learning outcomes, even if they have been acquired outside the university”. Despite the already well-established *Act on the Integrated Qualifications System*, which came into force in 2015, for a significant number of universities this definition is little known and relatively rarely used.

A **joint degree** is the term chosen by universities both for agreements based on a jointly developed and co-designed study programme and where the agreement is based on two (or more) parallel study programmes, where a number of students may apply for a joint partner university qualification after fulfilling additional mobility and other requirements set out in the agreement.

In the latter case, it should be noted that the programmes underlying such an agreement are characterised by a high degree of correspondence both between the field of study learning outcomes and programme content, and often even between the names of the individual subjects included in a given study programme.

This publication attempts to bring together the experiences of many Polish universities and systems from other countries in this area.

Issuing a joint document confirming the awarding of a joint qualification is currently possible in Poland, however, there are still many doubts and barriers around this process in Polish universities due to the provisions of the law, as Aleksandra Matukin-Szumlińska writes in her article.

Another concept, a **joint study programme**, is a very advanced form of cooperation in which universities jointly define a new qualification / new study programme. The study programme is entirely co-developed by the partners and is based on jointly developed components concerning the field of study learning outcomes, programme content, course names, recruitment rules, etc.

Universities implementing the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programme (EMJM) have the most experience in this field. It is a very advanced form of joint studies, as it requires equal participation of as many as three partners. However, there are more and more universities in Poland which develop an initiative of a joint study programme with one partner. These are most often programmes based on a specific didactic and research offer of individual universities. In the chapter describing the experience of Polish universities you can find many interesting examples of such practice.

A concept that is not fully understood among Polish universities is the term **joint studies**. Some of the universities define it as a joint study programme, while others clearly focus on the understanding of joint studies as a “joint degree”. The research and analysis carried out shows that in each case it is necessary to precisely define the interpretation of this concept adopted by a given university / agreement in order to clarify whether it is a jointly delivered study programme or a coherently awarded qualification based on separate programmes.

The last category of definitions around which the idea of double/joint studies is realised is the **double study programme**. This is probably the most frequently used formula for building the so-called double degrees, in which both partner universities build on already existing offers of study programmes. They look for common parts that can form the basis for fulfilling the standard of a given qualification assigned to both study programmes. In this category, there are also agreements based on study programmes with a high degree of compatibility in terms of field of study learning outcomes, programme content, subject names, etc. This is the added value of a specific type of standards applicable in selected areas and industries – universities in different countries follow the same guidelines and recommendations, often linked to international accreditations or other quality factors.

Double study programmes developed in Poland are definitely dominated by agreements based on different study programmes that do not have such names, often differ in

the structure of the programmes, names of subjects, etc. Many doubts often arise around the formula for cooperation and the building of a double degree, which, however, can probably be dispelled by adopting a certain line of thinking presented by the implementers of such agreements.

Qualifications awarded by universities in Poland should undoubtedly be a part of – and are a part of – the Integrated System and Register of Qualifications introduced by the Act of 2015². According to it, qualifications awarded by universities are part of a broader system of qualifications awarded from the very beginning of education, i.e. from primary school. In order for this system to be coherent and work well, a unified definitional approach to the qualifications to be awarded is recommended. In this respect, the need to actively incorporate all the background related to the *Act on IQS* into the formal and legal basis used by universities is often mentioned.

When reading the definition of qualifications in the *Act on IQS*, it is clear that qualifications are understood as “a set of learning outcomes [...] acquired in formal education, non-formal education or through informal learning [...], the achievement of which has been verified in validation”.

Validation, according to the definition adopted in the *IQS*, “means checking, whether a person applying for a given qualification, irrespective of the way in which the person learns, achieved a separate part

1 “Qualification – a set of learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and social competences, acquired in formal education, non-formal education or through informal learning, in accordance with the requirements set for a given qualification, the achievement of which has been verified in validation and formally confirmed by an authorised certification body”, per: *Act on IQS* of 22.12.2015

2 *Act on IQS* of 22.12.2015.

or the whole of the learning outcomes required for this qualification” (Article 2 item 22 of the *Act on IQS*).

It is clear from the above definition that an institution of higher education, when wishing to award a qualification, must ensure that an applicant has achieved a particular set of learning outcomes. The award of a qualification does not therefore require the confirmation of completion of any specifically defined learning process, since, according to the current definition, the acceptable routes to a given set of learning outcomes can be very different.

Polish law allows, to a limited extent, for the validation of outcomes acquired in non-formal education or through informal learning for the award of full qualifications. However, the scope for action by universities to validate learning outcomes acquired in formal education is quite wide. This is guaranteed, inter alia, by the Bologna Declaration and the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) adopted in Poland, which obliges higher education institutions to apply the basic principles of ECTS, in particular to respect the right of students to accumulate and transfer credits. According to the ECTS Users Guide³:

Accumulation of achievements (credits) is the process of accumulating achievements with associated ECTS credits. Accumulation of credits occurs as a result of a positive verification of the student’s achievement of the learning outcomes attributed to the individual educational components, regardless of the conditions (formal education, non-formal education, informal learning) and the time of learning. Students can accumulate ECTS credits in order to: - obtain a qualification as required by the awarding institution; - document personal achievement for lifelong learning purposes.

Credit transfer is the awarding of ECTS credits to a student (learner) to enable him/her to accumulate credits and obtain qualifications. ECTS credits awarded to students in one study programme at an institution can be transferred and accumulated for the award of another qualification at the same or another institution. Credit transfer is crucial for student mobility. Universities and faculties may enter into agreements to ensure automatic credit transfer.

³ *ECTS Users Guide 2015*, Foundation for the Development of the Education System, Warsaw 2016, <https://www.frse.org.pl/czytelnia/przewodnik-dla-uzytkownikow-systemu-ects-2015>, accessed: 17.09.2021.

The above provisions are the main axis for developing mobility programmes in each university. They are not only the basis for the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme, but also a tool closely linked to the development of the European Qualifications Framework and the system for the recognition of qualifications across Europe.

The study found that there is a predominance of joint/double degree programmes for second-cycle studies. This is a natural phenomenon present throughout Europe and is due to the volume of qualifications. It is much easier to find the common part in a qualification covering 90-120 ECTS and 3-4 semesters of studies than in 8-semester engineering studies. However, there are universities in Poland that successfully implement the joint/double degree formula also at the level of first-cycle studies.

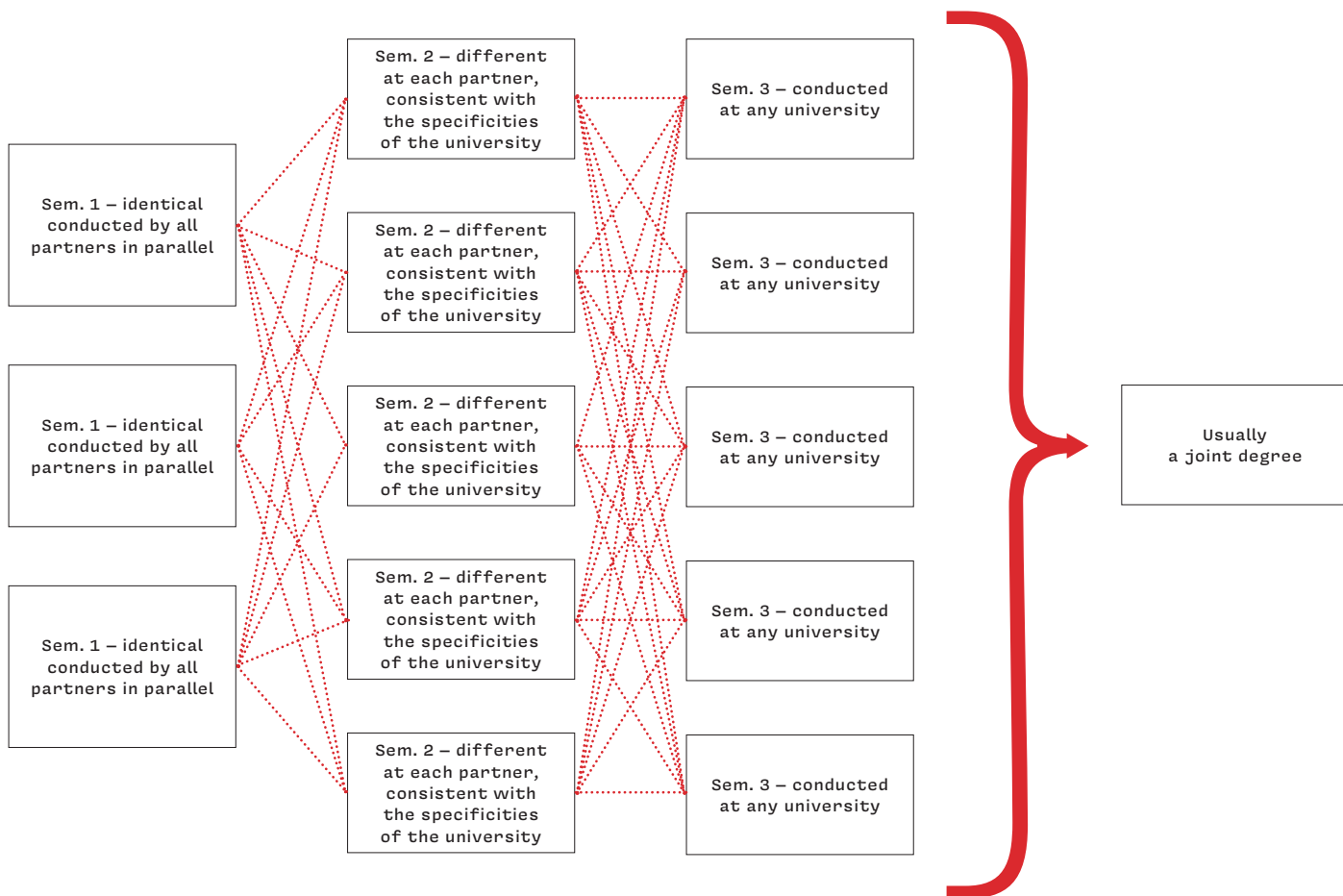
During the conference “Double degrees as a pillar of international strategic partnerships”, organised in 2018 by the International Relations Offices Forum (IROs Forum) together with the Lodz University of Technology, representatives of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (now: the Ministry of Education and Science) emphasised that the university has autonomy in defining individual programmes and qualifications and takes responsibility for who and how it awards them. This process may, of course, be subject to a qualitative assessment carried out in the course of compulsory programme accreditation, but in terms of setting the rules for awarding its own qualifications, the university has all the powers. It also emerged from the discussion at the time that the law treats double degree agreements and joint studies separately. Double degree agreements are an area of autonomous activity for universities, which

have the right to decide for themselves whether to meet the standard and award a defined qualification, and thus to sign partnership agreements of widely varying scope. It also emerged from the discussions at the time that the legislator, in introducing the amended Act, had specified provisions for the conduct of joint studies.

TABLE 1. Overview of possible variants of double/joint degree agreements identified at Polish universities

Number of programmes covered by the agreement	Number of awarded degrees/qualifications
1 jointly developed programme conducted in parallel	Usually 1 joint degree
1 jointly developed programme conducted jointly (division of individual semesters)	1 joint or multiple degree
2 or more of the same or very similar programmes conducted in parallel	Usually 2 or more degrees
2 or more partially identical programmes conducted in parallel	Usually 2 or more degrees, often with an additional joint certificate (partial qualification) confirming a selected subset of competences, according to a standard common to all partners
2 or more different programmes conducted in parallel, leading to similar standards – sets of learning outcomes	Usually 2 or more separate degrees

Source: own study



Source: own study

However, if a joint degree is not issued, the statutory provisions do not apply to agreements on the awarding of dual qualifications by partner universities. In this respect, the university should apply the regulations applicable to standard educational programmes and duly ensure the quality of the qualifications awarded.

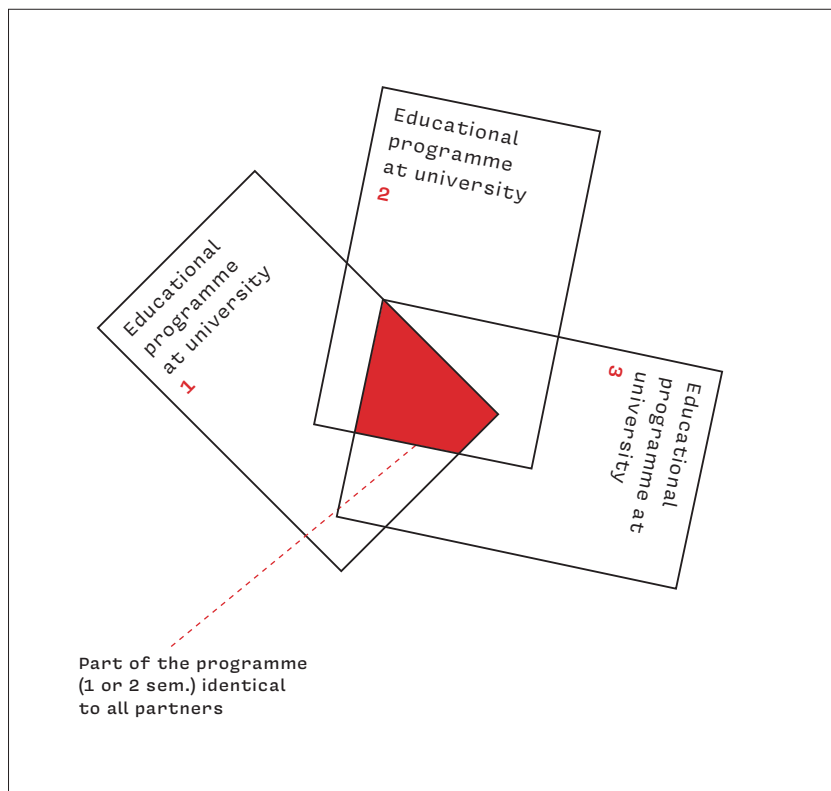
Polish universities have benefited from the above autonomy in very diverse and creative ways. It can definitely be said that Poland has developed an extremely rich base of tools to diversify and internationalise the educational process.

The models are very different. The individual chapters present their details. The table on the previous page lists the possible identified variants of joint/multiple degree agreements present at Polish universities.

Any of these options may be subject to further modifications and mutations. Universities, through signed joint/multiple degree agreements, often seek the best possible efficiency of co-running a given programme, resulting in very different patterns of learning pathways. The most popular cooperation schemes under such agreements have been presented above.

DIAGRAM 1. Model 1. A joint degree based on a joint programme conducted in parallel by partner universities

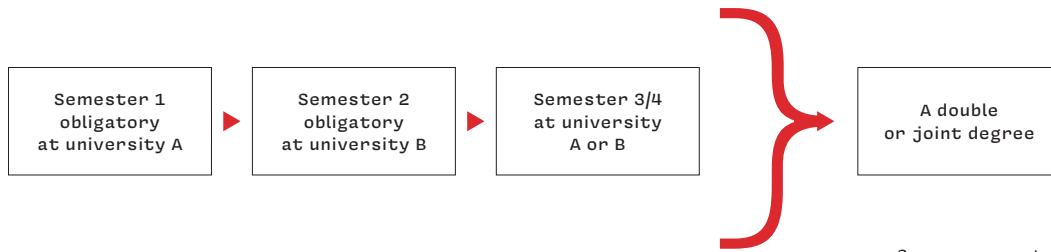
Model 1 is characteristic of most EM-JM study programmes. The universities agree together on the individual components of the learning pathway from the very beginning of the programme/qualification in question. If there are more than two partners, students usually have some freedom to shape their programmes, mobility and choose an individualised learning pathway. This is a model that allows for a distinction between the group of beneficiaries covered by the joint degree. Studying a given field of study may or may not be synonymous with the necessity to be mobile and obtain a joint degree. In some cases, students may complete a full degree programme at their home institution, in which case they receive a degree only from their home institution. This is a fairly advanced model of cooperation, requiring many arrangements on the part of all partners – signatories to the agreement, but leaving some flexibility to reach a wider target group. This model is often characterised by a very strong saturation of permeation between the educational and administrative experiences of the partner universities. Another added value are the jointly developed regulations and other documents, which often reconcile the legal requirements of partner universities. Such agreements often develop high level mechanisms for validating competences and related documentation. Most often, these kinds of agreements are developed at the Master’s level. This is because setting up a learning pathway is much simpler for a qualification with a slightly smaller volume than first-cycle studies. It should be mentioned that the pattern of the above exchange and model may or may not lead to a joint degree. There are successful solutions which result in students obtaining both several degrees and a joint degree.



Source: own study

Model 2 presents a situation in which universities implement separate study programmes, but some part of the programme is common and leads to identical competences. This is a model responding to contemporary trends in the development of a higher education offer oriented towards acquiring also a separate subset of a full qualification – a partial qualification. Often, universities are not able to standardise their study programmes as a whole, but they can share a certain part of the programme (1, 2 semesters) and see a great added value in it. It is a very convenient and flexible model for students, because usually many partners participate in a given programme / agreement, which gives students a huge range of possibilities for selecting mobility programmes.

DIAGRAM 2. Model 2. Double/joint diploma based on parallel study programmes, partly identical.

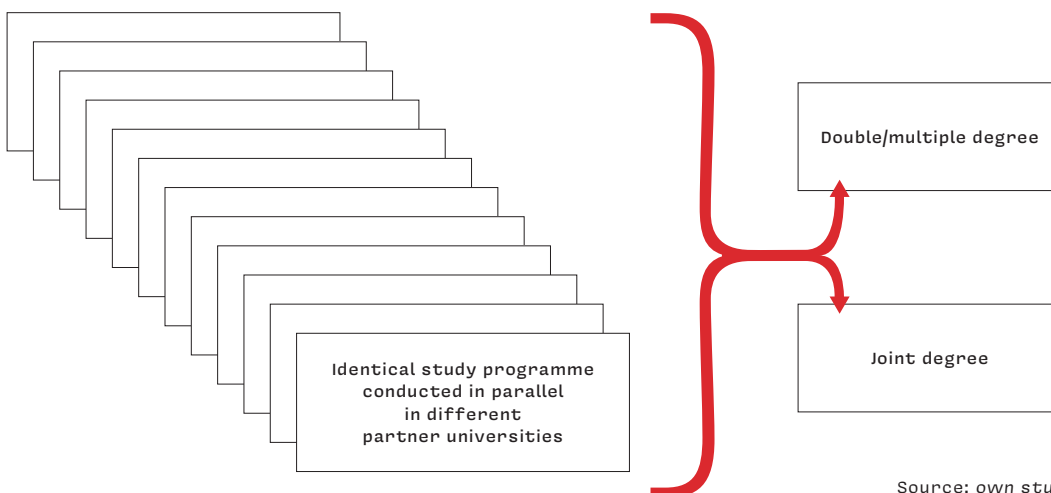


Source: own study

Model 3 represents a situation where universities jointly develop a given qualification / study programme from the outset, taking into account the specific characteristics of the partner. As a result, the pathway is structured according to a clear division of competences. Partners share the running of individual semesters and parts of programmes. This model is often used in the case of interdisciplinary programmes. Under such an agreement, the student usually follows a clearly defined learning pathway with no flexibility in choosing mobility programmes.

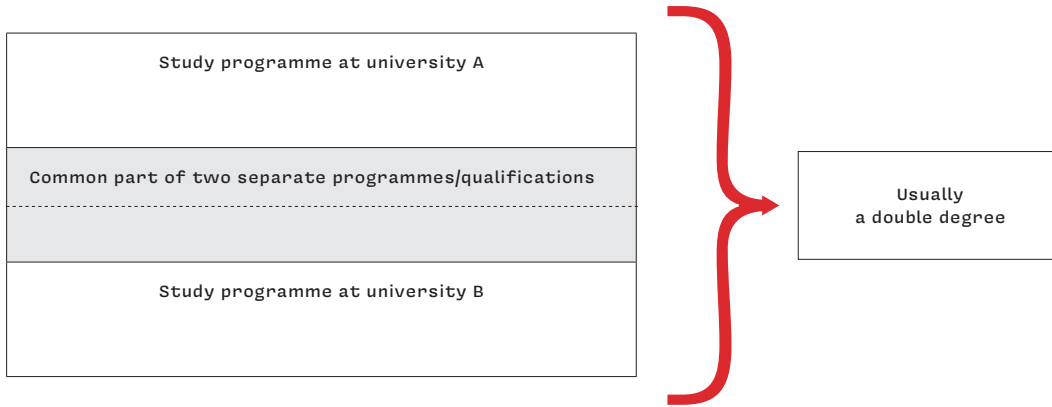
Model 4 is characterised by a high degree of compliance of the programmes included in a given agreement. Universities providing study programmes within a given area often take into account pan-European or worldwide educational standards in their study projects. These standards are often linked to international accreditation and professional quality labels. Universities implementing a given standard guarantee a specific scope of developed competences. In addition, the defined programme content and more detailed programme components, such as the names of individual subjects and the credit points allocated to them, are often part of such a standard. The added value of consistent implementation of such a standard is the multiplicity of programmes with very similar specifications and thus the ease of comparing qualifications and awarding joint/multiple degrees.

DIAGRAM 3. Model 3. A double/joint degree based on a joint programme run jointly with a clear division of responsibility for running each part/semester of the programme



Source: own study

DIAGRAM 4. Model 4. Double/joint degree based on identical study programmes conducted in parallel in partner universities



Source: own study

The last model is the most popular and is based on awarding joint/multiple qualifications resulting from partially similar study programmes. Often these programmes have different names and different components (subjects and credit points assigned to them). The awarding of qualifications takes place through an analysis of the field of study competences and the definition of learning pathways that can be followed by students from all parties involved in the agreement. Often the student must meet additional requirements in order to complete the qualification awarded at the partner university. Sometimes this is associated with an extended period of study.

The main conclusion that emerges from the analysis of the above diagrams is the presence in all solutions of a certain common part, of varying volume, implemented with a foreign partner. And this is perhaps the most important added value of the whole process related to both dual and joint degrees/qualifications. It implies the necessity and need for integration and exchange of process solutions on a supra-university, international level. This often means the involvement of foreign staff in the teaching process, not only to co-teach but also to co-decide on the development of the qualification in question and to effectively implement the quality assurance system. Double and joint degrees/programmes are therefore a very important and effective institutional learning tool for any university. Thanks to it, it becomes possible to build a unique educational offer, best suited to the needs of the socio-economic environment of the 21st century, not only in national terms, but also in European and global terms.

DIAGRAM 5. Model 5. Double degree based on separate study programmes conducted at partner universities

Terms used in the publication

DOROTA PIOTROWSKA, PHD, BENG, PROFPEŁ
Lodz University of Technology

The biographical note can be found
in the *Introduction* on page 11.

ACCUMULATION OF ACHIEVEMENTS (CREDITS)

– shall mean the collection of confirmed (as a result of validation) sets of learning outcomes which form part of the requirements defined in the qualification description.

CERTIFICATION

– the process by which, after successful validation, an applicant for a particular qualification receives a document from an authorised certifying body confirming the award of that qualification.

LEARNING OUTCOMES (EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES)

– knowledge, skills and social competences acquired in the learning process (Article 2 (4) of the *Act on the Integrated Qualifications System*).

COMPETENCE

– the broadly understood ability to undertake specific actions and complete tasks using learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and social competences) and one's own experiences. Therefore, competences cannot be equated with learning outcomes.

KEY COMPETENCES

– the combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes applicable in a wide range of contexts and a variety of links, needed by each individual for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion and active citizenship (Council of the European Union, 2018).

QUALIFICATION – a set of learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and social competences, acquired in formal education, non-formal education or through informal learning, in accordance with the requirements set for a given qualification, the achievement of which has been verified in validation and formally confirmed by an authorised certifying body.

DOUBLE DEGREE – (*double diploma/degree/qualification*) – two separate national degrees (documents) of universities conducting joint studies, issued to graduates of these studies and recognised in countries with a joint degree programme.

DOUBLE (MULTIPLE) DEGREE PROGRAMME – a study programme which is usually prepared on the basis of existing separate field of study programmes offered by partner universities. Such a programme is implemented in different forms – jointly, alternately or in parallel. The award of multiple qualifications is based on the validation of learning outcomes defining individual qualification standards.

POLISH QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK – a description of eight levels of qualifications identified in Poland, corresponding to particular levels of the European Qualifications Framework, which are described in Annex II to the *Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning* (OJ UE C 111 of 06.05.2008, p. 1), formulated by general characteristics of the learning outcomes for qualifications at particular levels, presented in the categories of knowledge, skills and social competences.

CREDIT TRANSFER – a process which involves the recognition by the provider of a qualification of learning outcomes which are components of the requirements for that qualification and which have been validated by other entities. Credit transfer means recognition by a certifying body of a successful outcome of validation (of a particular set of learning outcomes) that has been carried out by other institutions. The Act on IQS gives the certifying body the opportunity to recognise credits that have not been validated under its supervision, but the certifying bodies are not required to accept any requests for credit transfer submitted by applicants. Credit transfer makes it possible not to repeat the validation of outcomes that have previously been validated.

RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS

– a formal confirmation by an authorised institution of the validity of documents (certificates, diplomas) confirming the acquisition of qualifications abroad. Recognition of qualifications may take place on the basis of an appropriate agreement with a foreign partner or partners, and may concern individual cases. Qualifications obtained abroad are recognised in Poland to enable holders of foreign qualifications to gain entry to a university (to take up an academic career) or to enable such persons to practise a profession in Poland that requires a specific qualification. Recognition of qualifications should not be confused with validation. If a qualification awarded abroad is recognised by an eligible institution in Poland, the holder does not need to undergo validation again.

VALIDATION

– checking, whether a person applying for a given qualification, irrespective of the way in which the person learns, achieved a separate part or the whole of the learning outcomes required for this qualification (Article 2 item 22 of the IQS Act).

MULTIPLE DEGREE

(multiple diploma/degree/qualification) – more than two national and/or joint degrees that a graduate of a joint degree programme will receive, recognised in the countries where the joint degree programme is implemented.

JOINT DEGREE

(joint diploma/degree/qualification) – a single document issued by, among others, two joint degree-granting universities and recognised in the countries where the joint degree programme is implemented.

JOINT PROGRAMME

(joint degree programme) – an educational programme that is prepared and then jointly delivered by several (at least two) partners from two different countries. Some of the universities surveyed use the terms „joint studies” and „joint degree programme” interchangeably.

1

**———— Introduction
- the internationalisation
of higher education**

The internationalisation of higher education in the world and in Poland

AGNIESZKA PIETRZAK-KIRKIEWICZ

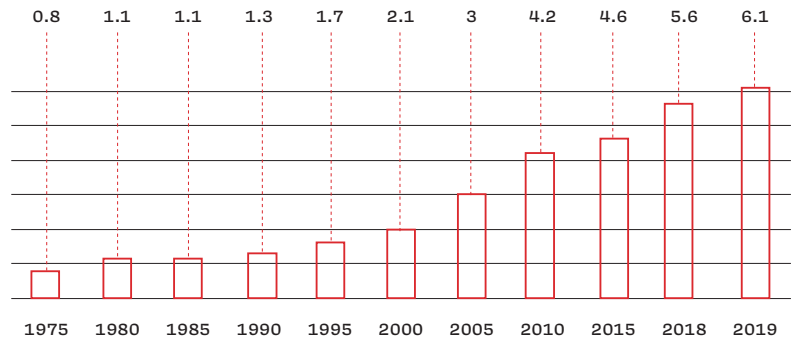
Internationalisation at the national, sectoral and institutional levels is the process of integrating international, multicultural and global elements into the purpose, function and delivery of post-secondary education (Jane Knight, 2015).

Internationalisation has become a permanent feature of the global higher education landscape. Most universities in the 21st century want to be recognised on the global market. To this end, they introduce international study programmes, cooperate with institutions in distant parts of the world and conduct research with them, organise exchanges of students and scientists. Some countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, have made the recruitment of students from other countries both thriving and highly profitable industries. And there is much to fight for. Research shows that the number of international students worldwide is steadily increasing. According to OECD data⁴, more than 6.1 million people studied abroad in 2019. This is twice as many as in 2007. The most popular host countries

A graduate of the Faculty of Journalism and Political Science of the University of Warsaw and Postgraduate Management Studies at the Warsaw School of Economics. From 2005, she worked at the Foundation for the Development of the Education System, dealing with communication and the promotion of EU funds for education and higher education. As director of the promotion division, she coordinated – on behalf of FRSE – the project of promoting Polish higher education abroad *Ready, Study, Go! Poland* launched in 2012 by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. She was responsible for Poland's presence at prestigious conferences and fairs all over the world, including APAIE, NAFSA and EAIE. In 2014-2016, editor-in-chief of the "Europa dla Aktywnych" quarterly. Currently, an expert and a reviewer in NAWA programmes – *Welcome to Poland* and *Promocja Języka Polskiego* [Promotion of the Polish Language]. Editor of "Gazeta SGH". She is responsible for the promotion in Poland of a programme for community organisations *Active Citizens Fund - National* funded by the European Economic Area (EEA).



are English-speaking countries. In 2019 the United States admitted 16% of all international students and Australia and the United Kingdom admitted eight percent each. Most of the students came from Asia (58% of all foreign students), mainly from China and India.



Source: own elaboration based on the UNESCO report *Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution*, 2009, and OECD data (*Education at a Glance* reports up to 2021).

DIAGRAM 6. Number of international students worldwide 1975 – 2019 (in millions)

In Europe, extensive research into the internationalisation of higher education is carried out by The European Association for International Education (EAIE). The *EAIE Barometer*⁶ survey conducted at the end of 2017, among 2,317 representatives of 1,292 academic centres from 45 countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) shows that internationalisation is a very important factor in the development of universities themselves, and official state strategies in this area are being developed increasingly often. International cooperation with the use of funding from European Union programmes such as Erasmus+ or Horizon 2020 is developing significantly, and academic centres from other parts of the world are increasingly willing to cooperate with European universities.

Over the decades, many materials, studies, reports have been produced on the internationalisation of higher education in the world. One of the most recent and quite broad studies of the subject is the report released in 2019 by the UNESCO-affiliated International Association of Universities (IAU) entitled *Internationalization of Higher Education: An Evolving Landscape, Locally and Globally. IAU 5th Global Survey*⁵. The organisation surveyed 907 universities from 126 countries. In more than 90% of the surveyed universities, internationalisation is part of official documents – the university’s development strategy or mission. The most important benefits of internationalisation were: the development of international cooperation, strengthening the potential of the university and improving the quality of teaching.

⁴ *Education at a Glance* Report, OECD, 2021.

⁵ G. Marinoni, *Internationalization of Higher Education: An Evolving Landscape, Locally and Globally. IAU 5th Global Survey*, International Association of Universities, 2019.

⁶ A. Sandström, R. Hudson, *The EAIE Barometer: Internationalization in Europe (Second Edition)*, The European Association for International Education (EAIE), 2018.

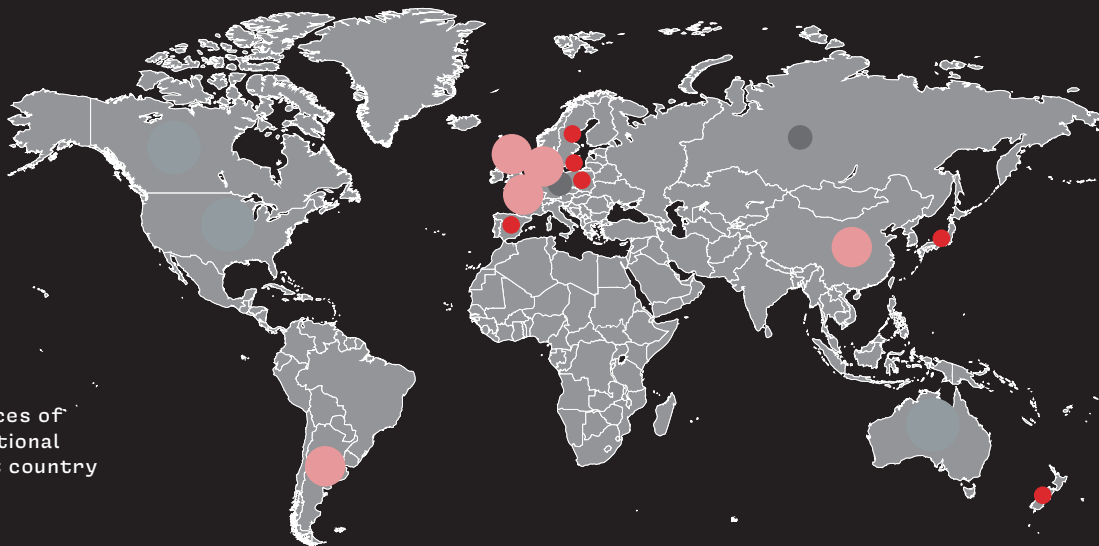


DIAGRAM 7. Main places of origin of international students by host country (in thousands)

● >500 ● 300-499 ● 100-299 ● 20-99 ○ <20 or is not a partner of the Atlas Project [thousand].

United States

CHINA	372 532
INDIA	193 124
SOUTH KOREA	49 809
SAUDI ARABIA	30 957
CANADA	25 992

Canada

INDIA	198 750
CHINA	98 565
FRANCE	21 515
UNITED STATES	13 200
SOUTH KOREA	12 260

Australia

CHINA	165 809
INDIA	90 918
NEPAL	34 645
VIETNAM	16 432
MALAYSIA	13 562

Argentina

BRAZIL	15 818
PERU	13 748
COLUMBIA	12 189
PARAGUAY	8785
BOLIVIA	8618

GREAT BRITAIN

CHINA	129 045
UNITED STATES	30 650
INDIA	27 915
GERMANY	18 405
FRANCE	18 230

China*

SOUTH KOREA	50 600
THAILAND	28 608
PAKISTAN	28 023
INDIA	23 198
UNITED STATES	20 996

France

MOROCCO	41 729
ALGERIA	31 196
CHINA	28 436
ITALY	14 692
TUNISIA	13 025

The Netherlands

GERMANY	23 022
ITALY	5563
CHINA	4697
BELGIUM	3952
BULGARIA	3680

RUSSIA

KAZAKHSTAN	67 831
CHINA	37 515
TURKMENISTAN	35 261
UZBEKISTAN	28 833
TAJKISTAN	20 752

Germany

CHINA	39 871
INDIA	20 562
SYRIA	13 032
AUSTRIA	11 495
RUSSIA	10 439

Japan

CHINA	94 047
VIETNAM	45 248
NEPAL	18 662
SOUTH KOREA	15 977
TAIWAN	7518

Spain

ITALY	15 543
FRANCE	14 323
UNITED STATES	9239
GERMANY	7476
COLUMBIA	7145

Polska

UKRAINE	40 698
BELARUS	7460
INDIA	3748
CZECH REPUBLIC	1627
NORWAY	1489

New Zealand

CHINA	19 950
INDIA	13 015
UNITED STATES	2785
MALAYSIA	1550
SOUTH KOREA	1355

Sweden

GERMANY	3588
FINLAND	2591
CHINA	2529
INDIA	2179
FRANCE	1929

Denmark

GERMANY	3302
NORWAY	3039
UNITED STATES	1794
SPAIN	1536
GREAT BRITAIN	1476

Source: Project Atlas, 2020

As the most important objectives of internationalisation, 76% of the respondents indicated preparing students for life in a globalised world and increasing their employability, while 65% indicated raising the quality of teaching. The most frequently cited internal challenges to internationalisation included: insufficient budget (39%), and lack of commitment from some faculty and staff (38%). Externally, it is also too little funding (31%), competition between institutions (28%) and international legal barriers (27%). These indications varied considerably from region to region, for example in North European countries the high cost of living was cited as one of the main obstacles.

The participants in this study were optimistic about the future. As many as 81% of the respondents viewed the future of internationalisation of their universities positively or very positively, and only 4% felt negatively. However, the authors of the study have raised some questions about the future of internationalisation of European universities in the years to come. Questions about the future were raised by, among other things, Brexit, i.e. UK's exit from EU structures, threats to close the Central European University in Budapest (the university moved its activities to Vienna in 2019) or government attacks on the independence of universities in Turkey. It is worth noting that this extensive study was carried out a few years before the COVID-19 pandemic. We will talk about the risks concerning the pandemic later in this publication.

There is also a steady increase in the number of foreign students in Poland. In the last 20 years, their number has increased by up to 10 times (Diagram 8). According to the preliminary results of the Central Statistical Office (GUS)⁷ published in June 2021 (as at 31 December 2020), 84,672 foreigners studied in Poland in the academic year 2020/2021, i.e. 3% more than in the previous year.

Foreign students in the academic year 2020/2021 accounted for 6.96% of the total number of students in our country (12 years ago they constituted only 0.82% of students, in the academic year 2018/2019 – 6.37% and in 2019/2020 – 6.8%). The increase in the internationalisation rate is due to the fact that more foreign students are studying at Polish universities, while the number of domestic students is steadily decreasing. In the academic year 2019/2020, a total of 1,203,998 people studied in Poland – over 26,000 fewer than in the previous year. This number is falling year to year, although in the academic year 2020/2021 there has been a slight increase to 1,215,300⁸. In comparison, over 1,900,000 people studied at Polish universities in the 2008/2009 academic year⁹.

Despite the systematic increase in the number of foreign students in Poland, we are still below the average value of the internationalisation indicator of universities in OECD countries. In 2017, it amounted to 8.9%, and in 2018 – 9.2%¹⁰.

7 Szkolnictwo wyższe w roku akademickim 2020/2021 (preliminary results) [Higher education in the academic year 2020/2021 (preliminary results)], GUS, 2021.

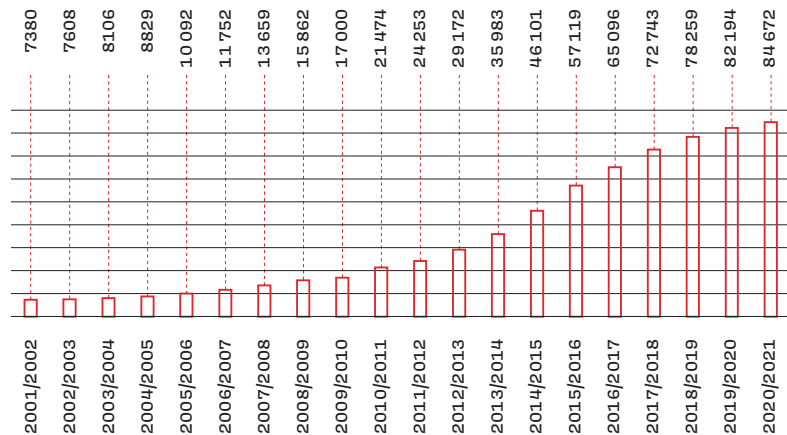
8 *Ibidem*.

9 Raport *Studentów zagraniczni w Polsce 2020*, „Perspektywy” Educational Foundation, Warsaw 2020.

10 International student mobility – OECD indicator, <https://data.oecd.org/students/international-student-mobility.htm#indicator-chart>, accessed: 14.05.2021

In the academic year 2020/2021, the majority of foreigners came from European countries, the largest group being Ukrainian (38,500 – 45.4% of all foreigners), Belarus (9,700 – 11.5%) and India (2,600 – 3%). Full-time studies were undertaken by 73,200 foreigners (86.5%). Nearly one third of all foreigners (24,500) chose universities in the Mazowieckie voivodeship¹¹.

In the 2019/2020 academic year (the last detailed data available at the time of closing of this publication), among foreign students, the most popular fields of study were business, administration and law – 24,200 people, social sciences, journalism and information – 12,400, health and social welfare – nearly 10,800, humanities and arts – more than 8,400, services – 8,000, technology, industry and construction – 6,000. The least successful were agricultural fields of study – only 946 people studied there. The largest group of foreign students visited: the Jagiellonian University in Cracow (2,980 people), the University of Warsaw (2,885), the University of Lodz (1,801), Warsaw University of Technology (1,747), Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin (1,714) and Wrocław University (1,532). Among medical universities, selected by over 7,800 people, the most popular were: the Medical University in Lublin, the Karol Marcinkowski Medical University in Poznań and the Gdańsk Medical University.



Source: own compilation based on GUS data (including reports on higher education and its finances), <https://stat.gov.pl>

DIAGRAM 8. Number of foreign students in Poland in 2001-2021

The motivation of foreign students to take up studies in Poland is also interesting. In 2016, as part of the work on the NAWA concept, a survey was conducted on a sample of 2,660 foreign students¹². It follows that students arriving for exchange and deciding to complete the full cycle of education in Poland make decisions in various ways. For the former, the most important are the desire to get to know a new country and to better master a foreign language. The low cost of living in Poland is also very important. On the other hand, for students who choose to complete the full cycle of studies in Poland, the most important asset is the possibility of studying in an EU country, the international recognition of the Polish diploma and good career prospects after graduation. Significant differences in motivation can also be seen between students from different regions of the world. Almost half of the Asian students point to the low cost of living

¹¹ Szkolnictwo wyższe w roku..., *op.cit.*

¹² A. Grzesiuk, *Studenci zagraniczni na polskich uczelniach wyższych. Uwarunkowania i praktyka*, "Marketing i Rynek" no. 4/2018, 246-56.

in Poland, while more than half of Ukrainian students point to good job prospects after graduation and the recognition of their diploma in the EU. According to the studies cited above, none of the groups of students surveyed indicated the quality of education as the dominant motivating factor for taking up studies in Poland.

Poland has achieved a strong position on the market of academic education in its eastern neighbours, as evidenced by the number of foreign students from Ukraine or Belarus. A major challenge is to continue to attract students, especially second- and third-level students, from developed countries. Support in this area is provided by, among others, the European academic exchange programme Erasmus+, in which Polish universities are participating with increasingly better results. In 2019, for the second time in the history of this programme, more students came to Poland (16,500) than left. More than a thousand mobilities were organised by universities from Turkey, Spain, Italy, France, Portugal and Germany¹³. In contrast, between 2014 and 2020, an average of 15,000 students left Poland each year, choosing to study or do traineeships in Germany, Spain, France, Italy and Portugal¹⁴. This trend is likely to continue in the following years. Partial data obtained directly from the Erasmus+ National Agency shows that we also hosted more students in 2020 than we sent. According to preliminary data (as of July 2021), 10,500 arrived and 7,500 left¹⁵. The data for 2020 are still being collected, so these figures will certainly increase.

Supporting the internationalisation of Polish universities is an important element at the level of state policy. In 2020, Poland's Supreme Audit Office (NIK) carried out an audit of the training of foreign students at Polish universities¹⁶. The summary report indicates that in 2017-2020, the Polish state provided the right legal and organisational conditions for the recruitment

and education of foreigners at Polish universities, and this task has been properly financed. As we read in the report, the joint actions of the Minister of Science and Higher Education (now: Minister of Education and Science), the Minister of Foreign Affairs, NAWA and audited universities have allowed for a gradual increase in the internationalisation of higher education in line with foreign policy priorities and development cooperation assumptions adopted by the Council of Ministers. The increase in the number of foreigners was related, inter alia, to the implementation of scholarship programmes. According to the NIK, however, it was unrealistic to reach the number of 100,000 foreign students at Polish universities in 2021. Such an objective was included in the *Multi-annual Foreign Cooperation Plan of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education* and in the opinion of the NIK it needs to be revised.

13 *Erasmus+. Raport 2019*, Foundation for the Development of the Education System, Warsaw 2020.

14 *Oblicza Erasmus+. Podsumowanie programu 2014-2020*, Vol. I, Foundation for the Development of the Education System, Warsaw 2020.

15 Data obtained directly from the Foundation for the Development of the Education System, the National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme: *Wyciąg z systemu eacdashboard_qv* dated: 8.07.2021.

16 *Kształcenie cudzoziemców na polskich uczelniach - informacja o wynikach kontroli [Education of foreigners at Polish universities - information on audit results]*, Supreme Audit Office, 9.03.2021, <https://www.nik.gov.pl/plik/id,23533,vp,26267.pdf>, accessed: 27.06.2021.

Challenges for the internationalisation of higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic

AGNIESZKA PIETRZAK-KIRKIEWICZ

A biographical note can be found in the chapter on *The Internationalisation of Higher Education in the World and in Poland*, p. 23.

International student mobility in the world and in Poland can decrease due to the COVID-19 pandemic announced by the World Health Organisation in March 2020. Most universities in the world have moved to online learning, which raises questions about the relevance of continuing studies that take place formally abroad and in practice often in front of a computer screen in the student's place of residence.

According to the authors of the report titled *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) The Impact of COVID-19 on Education - Insights from Education at a Glance 2020*¹⁷ there may be a reversal of trends in international student flows. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected student mobility in various respects. Many countries closed their universities and also their borders, forcing students to make quick decisions: whether to return to their home countries or stay in the host country. Some countries (e.g. Canada, UK) have been lenient with visa regulations, allowing students to stay on campuses. Universities implemented distance learning, which, for foreign students who returned home, meant depriving them of the basic benefits of

mobility – academic and social contacts in an intercultural environment, the experience of living in another country, improving their foreign language skills, access to the foreign labour market. The decline in the number of international students can have serious consequences for the funding of higher education institutions in countries where the tuition fees of international students are higher than those charged to native students (e.g. Australia, Canada, UK, USA). The authors of the study stress that the effects of the pandemic will be reflected in OECD reports for the following years.

We can read about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the internationalisation of higher education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in a report prepared by the European Association for International Education (EAIE) in 2020¹⁸. The authors of the study obtained over 800 individual questionnaires completed by university employees from 38 countries. Nearly three quarters of the respondents identified the impact of the pandemic on student and staff mobility as fairly significant or very significant. At the time of participating in the study, most of the respondents were implementing a pandemic anti-crisis action plan or were in the process of preparing to implement such a plan. The respondents also expressed the need to learn good practices from other universities in responding to this unprecedented situation.

The company Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), which issues publications on education and international studies, prepared a report: *The Coronavirus Crisis and the Future of Higher Education*¹⁹. By August 2020, surveys were collected from over 66,000 candidates for studies abroad from 198 countries. As many as 61% of the respondents stated that the pandemic had an impact on their decisions to undertake foreign studies. More than half of them considered that they wanted to postpone the start of education by one year, 10% considered changing the selected country of study, and 6% declared their resignation from study. Forty-five % of those surveyed were ready to start the academic year at a foreign university via remote learning, while 79% of them expected a reduction in tuition fees as a result.

In the second part of the survey, QS obtained over 1,700 questionnaires from university employees from all over the world. Most of the universities surveyed coped with the crisis caused by the pandemic by introducing remote classes – a figure that rose from 56% in March to 74% in June 2020. Some institutions were also postponing enrolment dates, with 17% declaring such changes in March and as many as 36% in June. Importantly, over 70% of the respondents expected a decrease in the number of foreign candidates in the coming academic year. Problems with moving freely around the world, fear of travel, postponement of the deadline for submitting application documents for the next academic year and reluctance to study ‘abroad’ remotely were most frequently cited as reasons. Visa facilitation, ‘corridors’ to allow travel between countries and additional scholarships were most frequently cited by respondents as actions that governments could take to facilitate international study. Only 19% of the respondents declared that their universities are considering reducing the tuition fee.

17 A. Schleicher, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Education – Insights from Education at a Glance 2020*, OECD, 2020.

18 L.E. Rumbley, *Coping with COVID-19: International Higher Education in Europe*, EAIE, 2020.

19 *The Coronavirus Crisis and the Future of Higher Education*, QS Quacquarelli Symonds, 2020.

20 *International Student Survey 2021 EU edition – Supporting Recovery and Driving Growth in Global Higher Education*, QS Quacquarelli Symonds, 2021.

The following QS report titled *International Student Survey 2021 EU edition - Supporting Recovery and Driving Growth in Global Higher Education*²⁰ included a summary of surveys conducted among over 105,000 foreign students from 191 countries and 115 universities. As many as 69% of the respondents studying abroad felt that their universities had coped with the introduction of distance learning during the pandemic. For 57% of applicants for international studies, when choosing a host country, it was important how the government of that country fought the pandemic. According to those surveyed, the crisis was best controlled in New Zealand (33% of indications). Already 68% of candidates said they would like to start the academic year in the host country, accepting a quarantine period, and 32% would prefer to start the academic year online from their place of residence.

US universities are optimistic about the post-pandemic future. According to the report of the Institute of International Education (IIE) *Preparing for the Future: The Path Forward for International Education Exchange*,²¹ published in June 2021, most of the 414 U.S. universities surveyed planned to open campuses for foreign students already in autumn 2021. As many as 86% of those surveyed intended to teach some classes in the traditional form – 62% wanted to introduce hybrid classes and 24% wanted to introduce full-time classes. Fifty percent of the respondents predicted an increase or even a stabilisation of the number of foreign students in the coming academic year.

Also in Poland, the long-term impact of the pandemic on the internationalisation of higher education will be shown in the coming years. The survey *Internationalisation in the times of the pandemic* conducted in May 2020 among 45 universities in Poland, shows that most of the universities surveyed were concerned that the number of new international students would decline as a result of the COVID-19²² pandemic. A fall of more than half compared to the 2019/2020 academic year was expected by 7% of universities, while 33% predicted falls of between 20 and 50%. One quarter of the universities surveyed recorded a small percentage of students who left Poland (up to 5%). This situation concerned mainly universities located in large centres – in Warsaw, Poznań, Gdańsk or Wrocław. Nearly half of the participating universities recorded the departure of a medium to large group of international students, and in 13% of the institutions more than half of them left. The largest number of departures, up to 50%, was recorded among students who arrived under bilateral agreements. Another group were students benefiting from the Erasmus+ programme (20-30%). The smallest outflow was observed among regular students. Almost half of those surveyed predicted that, with the lifting of pandemic restrictions, students would stay in Poland or return if they went to their home countries.

²¹ M. Martel, J. Baer, *COVID-19 Effects on US Higher Education Campuses Report 4*, Institute of International Education, 2021.

²² *Internacjonalizacja w czasach pandemii. Wpływ COVID-19 na studentów zagranicznych w Polsce i rekrutację na studia w roku akademickim 2020/21*, “Perspektywy” Educational Foundation, Commission for International Cooperation of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland, Warsaw 2020.

2

**———— Joint studies
- a global and
European context**

Joint studies in Europe and worldwide

AGNIESZKA PIETRZAK-KIRKIEWICZ

-----A biographical note can be found in the chapter on *The Internationalisation of Higher Education in the World and in Poland*, p. 23.

The term joint studies appeared in world literature in the 1970s²³, although certainly this form of academic education was in operation much earlier. In the Bologna Declaration of 1999, which initiated the process of unifying higher education in Europe, we find no direct reference to the idea of joint studies. However, already in the communiqué issued after the 2001 conference of ministers of higher education held in Prague, there was a clear encouragement to create modules, subjects or whole programmes in partnership with universities from other countries. The importance of joint studies increased with each subsequent ministerial conference. There was therefore the political will, as well as the need to support and develop joint studies in Europe.

In 2004, the European Erasmus Mundus programme was launched, aimed at making education offered by European universities more attractive and improving the quality of education by, among other things, realising joint study programmes. It certainly contributed to strengthening cooperation between European higher education institutions and raising awareness of the idea of joint studies. At present, such programmes can be implemented under the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programme (EMJM). However, this is not an action that can be considered massive on a European scale – in

2011, 11 projects received funding, in 2016 – 27, in 2018 – 42, and in 2019 – 44. The number of applications submitted has been fairly stable in recent years and has fluctuated around 100 per year²⁴.

Many studies on joint degree programmes can be found in recent European and global literature. This topic also appears as part of a publication that deals with the broadly understood internationalisation of higher education. There is no single, collective source of statistical information on joint studies, as most countries still do not collect data on a regular and systemic basis. Globally, there is a growing interest in programmes of this type, although they are still considered elite studies, requiring a great deal of effort both to launch and to run.

Already in the first decade of the 21st century, research was carried out on the state of implementation of joint studies in Europe and worldwide. The 2002 report by the European University Association (EUA)²⁵

highlights the role of joint studies in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the compatibility of the idea of their creation with the objectives of the Bologna Process. At that time, 26 countries involved in the implementation of the Bologna system confirmed that their universities had joint studies in their offer.

In 2011, the Institute of International Education (IIE) published a report²⁶ on the status of joint and double degree studies on the basis of a study conducted among 245 institutions from 28 countries, including Poland. As many as 95% of those surveyed stressed that they intend to develop joint and double degree programmes at their universities. The respondents most often conducted such programmes with partners from France, China, Germany, Spain and the United States. Interestingly, Poland ranked 9th in this ranking. Most of the surveyed universities engaged in joint studies between 2001 and 2009. According to the respondents, the greatest challenges of joint studies and double diplomas were to ensure stable funding. The most important benefits, on the other hand, included expanding the educational offer, strengthening research cooperation, developing the internationalisation of the institution and raising its prestige.

According to the latest report on the internationalisation of higher education in the world²⁷ issued in 2019 by the IAU, universities from North America have the greatest experience in carrying out joint

study programmes. It is in this region of the world that the highest percentage of universities offering programmes of this type has been recorded. In contrast, the fewest joint degree programmes are offered by universities in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is also worth noting that studies in the form of double or multiple degree programmes are much more popular than studies leading to a single joint degree, and this applies to all levels of education.

In EOSW countries, less than 25% of institutions participate in joint study programmes and less than 5% of universities award joint degrees. According to *The Bologna Process Implementation Report 2018*, in many EOSW countries the lack of appropriate legal regulations is a major obstacle to launching and conducting joint studies²⁸.

Joint studies certainly cannot be classified as “mass” courses. They are characterised by a small number of students admitted. The authors of the study conducted in the *REDEEM* project²⁹ indicate that 60% of the joint degree courses surveyed had fewer than 15 students and a third had fewer

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- 23 *Official Journal of the European Communities No. C 38 of 19 February 1976*, which uses the term *joint programmes of study and research between institutions in several Member States*.
- 24 *Wspólne studia magisterskie Erasmus Mundus w programie Erasmus+*, Foundation for the Development of the Education System, 2020, <https://2014-2020.erasmusplus.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Polskie-uczelnie-w-EMJMDs-E.pdf>, accessed: 10.02.2021.
- 25 C. Tauch, A. Rauhvargers, *Survey on Master Degrees and Joint Degrees in Europe*, European University Association, European Commission - Directorate General for Education and Culture, Brussel 2002.
- 26 D. Obst, M. Kuder, C. Banks, *Joint and Double Degree Programs in the Global Context. Report on an International Survey*, Institute of International Education, 2011.
- 27 G. Marinoni, *Internationalization of Higher Education: An Evolving Landscape, Locally and Globally. IAU 5th Global Survey*, International Association of Universities, 2019.
- 28 *The European Higher Education area in 2018: Bologna Process Implementation Report*, European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, Luxembourg: Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018.

than 5 students. Similar data can be found in the above-mentioned IIE report³⁰ – 76% of those surveyed enrolled fewer than 25 students in joint studies.

According to the data contained in *The EAIE Barometer* report,³¹ as many as 64% of those surveyed indicated joint or double degree studies as an action taken as part of the internationalisation of their university. In addition, in 29% of cases, these studies were included in the list of internationalisation priorities.

The next report *The EAIE Barometer: Internationalization in Europe (second edition). Signposts of Success*³², developed on the basis of a survey on success factors in internationalisation, shows that 74% of those surveyed have made progress in implementing joint or double degree studies in the last three years. Only 30% of the respondents described progress in the development of such studies as significant. This allows us to conclude that this form of international cooperation is important for universities from EOSW.

It is also worth looking at research on joint studies in specific countries. Germany is an interesting example here. In 2015, a consortium of two agencies: evalag and the Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in Engineering, Informatics, Natural Sciences and Mathematics (ASIIN) carried out a broad evaluation of the national programme *Integrierte internationale*

Studiengänge mit Doppelabschluss (Integrated International Studies with a Double Degree). A total of 1,208 students and 516 project managers/coordinators were surveyed. For information on the results of the study, see the text by T, Head of the Section for Internationalisation of Teaching at the German Academic Exchange Centre (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, DAAD*), in Part II, Joint studies - experiences of other countries.

²⁹ REDEEM project, <https://www.redeemproject.eu/>, accessed: 8.02.2021.

³⁰ D. Obst, M. Kuder, C. Banks, *Joint and Double Degree Programs in the Global Context*, *op.cit.*, 2011.

³¹ A. Sandström, R. Hudson, *The EAIE Barometer: Internationalization in Europe (Second Edition)*..., *op.cit.*

³² *Ibidem.*

**Joint studies
- the experiences
of other countries**

Double degree studies – added value for students and universities

Evaluation of the DAAD funding programme
for double degree studies at German universities

TABEA KAISER

Double degree studies play a key role in most internationalisation strategies at German universities. In order to enable universities in Germany to open and pursue such international courses of study, the German Academic Exchange Centre (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, DAAD*) launched an Integrated International Studies Programme with a Double Degree in 1999.

This programme, carried out by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF*), supports studies with a double or joint degree awarded by a German university together with a foreign partner institution. The aim of the programme is to strengthen the internationalisation of universities in Germany by promoting the creation of international studies and mobility of German students and facilitating the exchange of teachers and students. Since 2000, 1,049

Head of the Section for the Internationalisation of Teaching at the German Academic Exchange Centre (DAAD). She directs funding programmes to support the creation of international degree courses at German universities. Before taking up this post, she managed a scholarship programme for young German specialists who wished to work in international organisations. Tabea Kaiser started work at DAAD in 2006 after several years of study and work abroad – in the United States, Canada and Thailand. She holds a Master's degree in American literature and language, political science and recent history from the University of Bonn.



applications have been granted, contributing to the launch of several hundred fields of study (270 since 2009).

In the autumn of 2015, a consortium of two agencies: evalag and Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in Engineering, Informatics, Natural Sciences and Mathematics (ASIIN) was established to conduct an evaluation of the programme's performance. The evaluation finished in February 2017. It focused on the target group of the programme, i.e. German universities and key persons involved in double degree studies: students, teachers and other university employees. The evaluation tools included two online questionnaires involving 1,208 students and 516 project managers/coordinators. In addition, discussions were held in focus groups, interviews and expert workshops to discuss, analyse and verify the results.

CONTEXT

The majority (60%) of joint/double degree courses funded by the programme belonged to the areas of law, economics, social sciences and engineering sciences. Double degree studies are much more popular (85%) than joint studies (15%). In addition, collaboration is more common in Master's degree programmes (73%) than in Bachelor's degree programmes (27%). Most international programmes (60%) are carried out in cooperation with European universities. The objectives of the Bologna Process and the direction of changes that started in the higher education system play an important role here. Since this process is oriented towards the internationalisation of European universities, it provides a stronger basis for cooperation between the European institutions that wish to offer double degree programmes.

Although double degree studies are undertaken by a relatively small number of people, such courses often have great potential for universities.

VALUE ADDED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENTS

The number of double degree programmes is limited, with relatively few students. Therefore, these studies do not have a significant impact on the overall mobility of students. At the same time, international programmes offer many benefits and to a great extent meet students' expectations. More than half of the students rate these studies as good or excellent. According to the results of an online survey, students particularly appreciate the scope of substantive content (74% assess this aspect of studies as very good or excellent) and their validity (78%). Feedback from graduates of these courses is even better: around two thirds of respondents rate their field of study as good or excellent. Apart from the aspects mentioned above, graduates highly assess the teaching methods (69%), the link with current scientific research (65%) and the practical relevance of their degree (61%).

The reasons for choosing such studies clearly indicate the importance that students attach to their international character. In this context, they often mention foreign trips, intercultural competences and knowledge of foreign languages they gain from such studies. Most of the students surveyed also rated their time abroad as good or excellent. For them, the activities undertaken by study coordinators related to the provision of support and information played an important role. Half of the students surveyed attributed considerable importance to advice and support, which often helped them to overcome important organisational obstacles while studying abroad.

Regarding the skills acquired by the participants of the double degree programme, the survey showed that the students mentioned, in their self-assessment, primarily the international/intercultural competences acquired. Project managers, on the other hand, particularly appreciate the motivation, mobility and international attitude that students gain from double degree studies. From the managers' point of view, staying abroad significantly improves the intercultural competences and soft skills associated with a longer stay abroad for students. These skills include independence, social competence and linguistic proficiency. They all lead to an increase in the level of professional knowledge and significantly increase opportunities in the labour market.

VALUE ADDED FOR UNIVERSITIES

When asked about their personal perspective, project managers and coordinators are generally positive about the knowledge and skills acquired through the exchange with the partner university. This applies, in particular, to relations with colleagues at the university and to achieving intercultural understanding towards the host country. The evaluation also shows that cooperation often goes beyond double degree programmes and can result in joint research projects and publications. The exchange concerns not only academic teachers, but also research assistants and administrative staff, thereby extending internationalisation to other areas within the institution. This effect is deepened by support and information structures funded by the programme, which in turn promotes the creation of permanent links between partner universities.

The evaluation shows that initiatives for establishing partnerships usually start with individual academics and are then integrated into the internationalisation strategy of the respective university. The results of the study show differences between universities and technical universities. While in universities the creation of double degree programmes is usually initiated by individuals based on their professional contacts, technical universities seem to follow a top-down approach, choosing partner universities and areas of cooperation in a more strategic way. However, whether this process is top-down

or bottom-up, double degree programmes symbolise the strong link between two partner institutions and thus have inherent strategic value.

The experience gained from existing cooperation can stimulate interest in creating double degree courses. It appears that universities often choose as partners higher education institutions with which they already cooperate at various levels. The interest of universities in opening double degree studies sometimes leads to a complete transformation of the corresponding fields of study. For German universities, a particularly important criterion for selecting a partner university is its reputation.

Another important aspect guiding German universities in opening double degree courses is the desire to attract the best educated international students, both as starting academics and as specialists needed in the labour market. In this respect, DAAD funding plays an important role in competing for the best educated and most motivated students. The programme finances scholarships enabling students to study at a partner institution abroad, which increases the attractiveness of double degree programmes.

Taking into account all these aspects, the symbolic value of double degree studies is important. Double degrees significantly increase the international recognition of the institutions, both in the recruitment of foreign students and in the positioning of research.

PERSPECTIVE: INCREASING THE VALUE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Although double degree studies are undertaken by a relatively small number of people, such courses often have great potential for universities. The evaluation also identifies areas that could be improved, thereby benefiting both institutions and students. The guidelines are aimed in particular at German universities, which are mostly financed from public funds and which do not charge tuition fees. Therefore, these findings may not apply to universities operating under other academic systems.

Double degree studies already play an important role in the internationalisation strategies of the majority of universities. As a result, the evaluation recommends universities to include such programmes in a separate and clearly defined internationalisation policy. Such internal solutions would have a positive impact on the sustainability of double degree courses. This, in turn, would contribute to a more systematic integration of individual initiatives and involvement in university policy. In the long term, this can also improve structural requirements for sustainable study programmes and partnerships. These results, particularly in the area of added value for students, indicate that study trips abroad may have a positive impact on a professional career. For this reason, the key role of graduates must be recognised and given special attention.

DAAD – THE GERMAN ACADEMIC EXCHANGE CENTRE

Thanks to DAAD (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst*), more than 130,000 students and academics from all over the world go on study and research stays abroad. DAAD is therefore one of the world's largest organisations supporting international academic exchanges. It is equally committed to internationalising German universities, reforming education systems in developing countries, as well as supporting the development of German studies and to promoting the German language abroad. DAAD is an association of German universities based in Bonn and Berlin. Projects implemented in various parts of the world are coordinated by representative bodies in 15 countries – including Poland. The network of local representative bodies is complemented by 56 DAAD Information Centres operating on all continents.

Double degree studies could benefit, especially in the long term, from the creation of a network of graduates and the tracing of their professional paths. It would be necessary to maintain contacts with graduates and to conduct regular research into their careers. In this way, graduates can make a significant contribution to promoting double degree studies and networking for current students in order to improve their career prospects and offer further research opportunities.

The results of the evaluation indicate that the value of double degree programmes often does not go hand-in-hand with their visibility. The websites of many double degree courses are difficult to find on university websites. They also lack basic information. Also, other PR activities of universities often fail to show the role these courses play in terms of their international reputation. Therefore, higher education institutions offering double degree studies should ensure greater visibility for these courses so that institutions and students can benefit from their internal value.

The article was based on the report *Evaluation of the DAAD financing programme "Integrated International Studies with a Double Degree"* submitted by evalag in January 2017.

Joint studies in Norway – difficulties and challenges

VIDAR PEDERSEN

Director for European Programmes in Hk-dir and Director for Education and Training of the Norwegian National Agency Erasmus+. For the last 15 years, he has held various managerial positions in Dik (former HK-dir). He also worked intensively on European and North American cooperation programmes. Pedersen received his cand. philology degree in English at the University of Bergen. Before he joined the Dik/SIU in 2001, he taught English at Bergen University and Agder University for eight years.

JOINT FIELDS OF STUDY – THE GOLD STANDARD OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Joint studies play an important role as they transfer international cooperation to a new level. They consist of structured cooperation around a specific field of study. Joint studies involve much more than simply offering students classes at a partner university or organising guest lectures. They are based on formal cooperation, which requires far-reaching interaction between universities, including harmonisation of structures, degrees, courses offered, etc. This is a completely new level of integration between the institutions, which is not necessary in the case of “normal” cooperation. Therefore, the former Norwegian Minister of Education, Torbjørn Røe Isaksen, called joint studies a “golden standard of international cooperation”. This is a very apt description, as joint studies involve offering a field of study along with a set of criteria and rules for admissions, thus finding common ground and creating something unique and completely new, rather than proposing a random combination based on what each university offers. Joint studies require the participation



and commitment of staff so that student mobility can be embedded in a broader framework of cooperation and provide an even wider field of education. Such courses have strong support from the Norwegian government – and even constitute a priority for it. They were formally admitted in 2005 under the University and Higher Education Act.

FINANCING MECHANISMS YESTERDAY AND TODAY

The main funding programme available to Norwegian higher education institutions since 2004 is the Erasmus Mundus programme [editor's note: this is now the central action "Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Programme"], funded by the European Commission. Erasmus Mundus immediately aroused great interest and helped to define what joint studies are. Prior to its introduction, international cooperation was much less frequent in Norway. The courses offered were mostly really joint study programmes, but some were double degree courses. It was clear that there was a desire to establish closer cooperation with universities from other countries.

Another programme is Nordic Master set up by the Norwegian Government in 2007. This initiative has also been welcomed with great enthusiasm. The programme offers funding for joint Nordic Master's degree courses based and focused on research, excellence and high quality. Such Master's programmes are provided by universities from at least two Nordic countries or their autonomous regions, while students may come from anywhere in the world.

The predecessor of the Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (*Direktoratet for høgare utdanning og kompetanse, HK-dir*) and the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education (*Datalogisk Institut Københavns Universitet, Diku*), i.e. the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education agency (*Norsk Senter for internasjonalisering av høgare utdanning, SIU*), has also on several occasions offered funding under the International Joint Studies programme from the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. This programme was suspended about seven years ago, partly because only a very small number of courses actually met

the strict criteria for joint degrees in the legal sense of the word, i.e. leading to a single joint degree. As this initiative has shown, it has been much easier to organise double degree courses.

UPWARDS, DOWNWARDS

There is currently a steady increase in the number of applications in the Erasmus Mundus programme, but still well below the results from the programme's heyday. It is apparent that enthusiasm for innovation has waned compared to 2005-2010, when there was widespread talk of joint studies and efforts to establish such collaborations. It seems that there has been some kind of verification of ideas in practice. Many institutions are currently facing problems such as administrative obstacles. Their experience shows that such projects are not easy. At the moment, many of these institutions are offering double degree studies instead of real joint studies. There is continued interest in the use of specialised collaborative models, but there are not many joint courses on offer in the strict sense of the word. Numerous looser forms of cooperation can have similar effects at the academic level. This was also our experience with the International Joint Studies programme referred to above. We observed that few joint degree studies resulted in a single joint degree, but a significant number of the institutions offering them met the other criteria for joint degrees.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Nord University (Nord universitet)	2	6	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3
Norwegian University of Life Sciences (Norges miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet)	-	-	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
Norwegian University of Technology (Norges teknisk- -naturvitenskapelige universitet)	8	9	9	9	8	8	8	8	9	8
Oslo Metropolitan University (Oslomet - storbyuniversitetet)	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	-	-
Agder University (Universitetet i Agder)	-	-	-	1	1	1	2	3	3	2
Bergen University (Universitetet i Bergen)	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	3	4	3
Oslo University (Universitetet i Oslo)	2	3	3	6	7	8	9	9	10	10
Stavanger University (Universitetet i Stavanger)	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
University of South-East Norway (Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge)	-	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	8	2
University of Tromsø - Norwegian Arctic University (Universitetet i Tromsø - Norges arktiske universitet)	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Norwegian Sports University (Norges idrettshøgskole)	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	2
Østfold University (Høgskolen i Østfold)	-	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Technical University of West Norway (Høgskulen på Vestlandet)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Public universities	23	33	33	42	41	45	46	46	51	40
VID Specialist University (VID vitenskapelige høgskole)	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kristiania University (Høgskolen Kristiania)	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Private universities	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Summary	23	34	34	43	42	45	46	46	51	40

Source: Norwegian Research Data Centre (Norsk senter for forskningsdata, NSD)

The Nordic Master programme also received a lot of interest in the beginning, but later, when excitement about the new opportunities subsided, the number of applications decreased and is now stable.

MAIN CHALLENGES

One of the main challenges is... money. Conducting joint degree programmes is quite expensive. The distribution of funds within a consortium can also be a problem. Many Norwegian universities also raise legal

TABLE 2. Participation in the International Joint Studies programme according to data of Norwegian higher education institutions 2010-2019

issues, e.g. they cannot charge students tuition fees while other institutions fund their Master's programmes in this way. There are also quite a few other problems, e.g. the way credits are counted, the financial implications for Norwegian universities, the way joint degree students are registered. A large part of these difficulties can be avoided by deciding to pursue a double degree instead of a joint degree. They offer many of the elements proposed by joint studies and also give the opportunity to create your own study programme. The only difference concerns the type of diploma obtained.

There continues to be a move towards joint degrees, but with looser criteria than would be required for fully-fledged degrees leading to a joint diploma. There is, of course, no doubt that the idea of joint degrees and the Erasmus Mundus programme have given universities an incentive to strengthen cooperation.

It will really be interesting to see what the European Universities' initiative will bring in the future. Given the type of cooperation envisaged, further courses of joint studies and several courses offered by more than two universities can be expected. The question is whether the planned integration of European higher education institutions will in fact lead to a renewed interest in joint studies. This seems to be definitely possible and even probable!

THE NORWEGIAN DIRECTORATE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND SKILLS (DIREKTORATET FOR HØGARE UTDANNING OG KOMPETANSE, HK-DIR)

The Directorate for Higher Education and Skills was established on 1 July 2021, under the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. The Directorate for Higher Education and Skills is a result of the merger of the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku), Skills Norway, and Universell, as well as parts of Unit and the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). The directorate will also be taking over selected tasks for the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT).

The directorate is the executive agency for the Ministry of Education and Research within the higher education and higher vocational education sectors and is responsible for the national skills policy. We advise the Ministry, we implement national policies, and we coordinate incentive schemes and management instruments.

The directorate shall contribute to enhance the quality of education and skills, strengthen international collaboration, and be a driving force for the digital restructuring of Norwegian universities and university colleges. We strive to enhance knowledge and skills in the population, make lifelong high-quality education and learning accessible to all and ensure that the world of work has access to a competent work force.

<https://hkdir.no/norwegian-directorate-for-higher-education-and-skills>

Joint and double degree studies in the United States

CLARE OVERMANN

Joint and double degree programmes are a fairly common form of international cooperation in the United States, although double degree programmes – in which you earn a separate degree from each participating institution – are offered more frequently than joint degree programmes, in which you earn only one degree. Research in the United States has shown that double degree programmes operate mainly at the undergraduate level and tend to favour arrangements in which international students begin their studies at their home university and complete them at a US university, where they spend a year or several years. At the end, they receive degrees from both institutions³³. Such an arrangement is regarded as an important part of the plan for the internationalisation of American universities and as a tool for increasing student mobility.

A global survey conducted by the Institute of International Education (IIE) and the *Freie Universität Berlin* on joint degree and double degree programmes found that the main reasons why US institutions agreed to collaborate on joint degree or double degree programmes differed somewhat from those of their foreign partners. All participants in the study wanted to increase the level of internationalisation and international visibility and prestige of the universities.

Head of the Higher Education Initiative Department at the Institute of International Education. She manages a number of programmes aimed at supporting the global academic community in developing cooperation and mobility. These programmes include the IIE *Generation Study Abroad* and the IIE *Centre for International Cooperation*. Her latest publication includes the *Global Perspectives on Strategic International Partnerships: A Guide to Building Sustainable Academic Linkages* (2016). The author holds a BA in Spanish Philology from Georgetown University and an MA in International Education from New York University.



However, respondents from the United States also included increasing the presence of international students among their top priorities³⁴. The same study found that joint or double degree programmes offered in the United States often involved fewer than 15 students. As in many other countries, the most popular disciplines in which

³³ C. Banks, M. Kuder, D. Obst, *Survey on International Joint and Double Degree Programs*, Institute of International Education and the *Freie Universität Berlin*, Berlin 2011.

³⁴ This trend is confirmed by the data published in *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses: 2017 Edition*, American Council on Education 2017, which indicate that mobility carried out by American universities as part of joint and double degree studies is unidirectional. Almost 80% of participants in such programmes are students from outside the United States (2016 data).

such programmes are offered are business and management and engineering studies, according to US respondents.

AMERICAN CASE STUDIES

Interviews concerning several well-established double degree programmes in the United States have shown that there is a range of models that sometimes include two institutions and sometimes many partners. A well-known example of successful collaboration is the systemic partnership between the State University of New York (SUNY) and the Turkish Council of Higher Education (*Yükseköğretim Kurulu, YÖK*). Cooperation includes double degree studies in 16 academic disciplines. Over 3,000 Turkish students have benefited from the programme in the last 20 years. The cooperation offers various forms of mobility, including 2+2 and 1+2+1 studies (two years at the home university plus two years at the partner university or one year at the home university, two years at the partner university and the final year at the home university). The effects of double degree studies are well illustrated by the statement of a Turkish SUNY student (double degree graduate), which shows the added value of cooperation between the home university and an institution in the United States:

“I received offers from the best Turkish companies and took up work immediately after graduation. My salary is higher than the average wage in Turkey and it will increase as I am promoted”.

Other examples of successful partnerships involving US universities include double degree programmes in mechanics and machine construction offered by the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) and the *Technische Universität Darmstadt* (Germany), and programmes offered by Clemson University in collaboration with the *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven* (Belgium) and Maastricht University

(Belgium). Many of the courses in partnerships between US universities and universities from the European Union countries have been funded by the US Department of Education’s *EU-US Atlantis* programme, which sponsors projects to create consortia conducting transatlantic studies.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOGNISING DEGREES

In the United States, one of the most important aspects of recognition of degrees is accreditation. As there is no central institution in the USA responsible for accreditation, i.e. recognition of institutions and specific study programmes, this function is performed by regional and industry accreditation bodies. The decentralised and community-based nature of the accreditation process used in the United States makes it much more difficult to recognise joint degrees than double degrees. If we add to this the already troublesome process of creating and agreeing a joint study programme, it is understandable why joint studies are much less popular in the USA. Moreover, from the perspective of graduates, double degree studies may appear to be a safer solution, as the degree obtained at the home university provides a clear, separate confirmation of qualifications, recognised by future employers or universities offering further levels of education. In some cases, even though a person has graduated with a double degree, they can only present the degree that will be more recognisable to the employer.

THE MAIN CHALLENGES

In the aforementioned study on joint and double degree programmes, respondents mentioned a number of common difficulties related to cooperation. These included ensuring sustainability and sufficient funding for studies, as well as the creation of curricula. US respondents cited negotiating the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), resolving issues related to the

double counting of credits and the duration of study as among the biggest challenges. These answers clearly indicate additional bureaucratic obstacles and the recent existence of joint degrees and double degrees, which US partners have to deal with. An additional challenge typical of the US, which the respondents from other countries did not rank as a major problem, is language, although English was definitely mentioned as the language most commonly used when pursuing joint and double degrees.

Despite the administrative challenges, the courses of study offered under international cooperation have had a positive impact on American universities and continue to form part of their mobility offer. As with other strategic partnerships, these courses enable US institutions to increase internationalisation and improve staff collaboration and university visibility. Furthermore, they are a good way of establishing other forms of cooperation and partnership between universities in the United States and in other parts of the world. In response to a question (in the previously mentioned survey) about the institution's plans to create further joint or double degree programmes, 90% of respondents in the United States said they planned to create either more double degree programmes alone or more of both types of programmes.

PERSPECTIVES

US universities are constantly striving to respond to the needs of students and provide them with the experience and qualifications they will need in the future. Therefore, joint and double degree studies will probably continue to provide students from other countries with an opportunity to come to the United States, but they will never become an important factor in making universities more attractive to American students. Mobility trends in the United States clearly indicate an increase in demand for short-term study abroad and experiential learning

and traineeships³⁵. Student exchanges and other offers of studies abroad often provide a sufficient response to the American students' need for international experience. On the other hand, joint or double degree studies have not been widely promoted, nor has it been sufficiently explained what the particular value of such courses is. However, such studies remain a common tool for building cooperation by university units responsible for international relations. They will also continue to be an important element of mobility for those interested in studying at American universities.

IIE – INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION, THE UNITED STATES

IIE is the world leader in the international exchange of people and ideas. Operating since 1919, the organisation has 19 offices and branches around the world and over 1,200 member institutions. It designs and implements study and training programmes for students, teachers, young professionals and conducts research on internationalisation and advises on international education. Since 2009, IIE's Centre for International Partnerships has supported universities from around the world to build links with their counterparts in other countries through strategic planning, workshops, training and publications.

NAWA is a member of the Atlas Project implemented by IIE and a partner of the Generation Study Abroad programme, which aims to increase the number of American students taking up studies abroad through, inter alia, participation in international exchange programmes.

³⁵ Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange, 2019.

FRANCE

Polish and French experience in the area of joint study programmes and double degrees

JOANNA JACHIMCZUK-LORA

FRENCH POLICY

In France, joint study programmes and double degree programmes with foreign partners from all over the world are undoubtedly one of the tools supporting the development of international academic and scientific cooperation. Although no general policy on this particular issue has been formalised, both the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation encourage the establishment and development of such cooperation. Particularly in Central European countries, which are confronted on the one hand with decreasing numbers of students as a result of the demographic decline and on the other hand with low unemployment translating into rapid employment of graduates or students, joint study programmes are one of the solutions to support academic exchange and student mobility. The development and promotion of double degrees allows you to complete your studies both in France and in your own country, to be well-received by universities that see

is a graduate of law at the University of Warsaw and *Université de Poitiers* (double Polish-French degree). In 2007-2014, she cooperated with the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights and the Professor Zbigniew Holda Association on numerous projects in the field of law, communications and education. Associated with the French Embassy and the French Institute in Poland, where she served as Deputy Attaché for Science and University Cooperation from 2017 to 2021. She is currently a project coordinator in the Awards and Scholarships Team of the Foundation for Polish Science.



the benefit of implementing this type of programme, and to involve industry and companies, creating tailor-made programmes to meet the specific needs of the labour market.

French universities are developing double degree education, collaborating with many countries around the world. In Europe, such education is most popular in countries where French is most widespread, such as Romania or Poland, or in countries neighbouring France, such as Germany, Italy or Spain. Existing structures or networks of “Franco-X” universities, such as the French-Italian University, which has a programme to support French-Italian double

degrees, are particularly fertile ground for developing this type of cooperation (<https://www.universite-franco-italienne.org/>), or the French-German University (<https://www.dfh-ufa.org/fr/>).

Similarly, double or multilateral degree programmes can be expected to develop under the European Universities project initiated by President Emmanuel Macron. Currently, as many as seven consortia of European universities involve Polish and French universities simultaneously. In some of them, such as the Forthem Alliance (<https://www.forthem-alliance.eu/en/>), it is, for example, the partnership already in place since 2013 in the Europa Master triple degree programme between the University of Opole, *Université de Bourgogne* in France and *Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz* in Germany that has laid the foundations for further, in-depth cooperation in the framework of the European University established by the European Commission already as a result of the first competition in 2019. More recently, the idea of a single common online catalogue containing a database of all double degree programmes implemented by French universities in collaboration with foreign partners around the world has emerged. This idea is being analysed.

SPECIFIC LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The obvious advantage of facilitating the implementation of double degree programmes at French universities is that they are based on a clear legal basis. French legislation on this type of international cooperation (contained in the Education Code [*Code de l'éducation*], Articles D613-17 to D613-25) regulates both the agreement on the basis of which a joint study programme is established and the issues related to the issuance of a degree on completion of this programme.

The legislation provides for international cooperation based on an agreement between one or more French higher education institutions and one or more foreign universities. In particular, the agreement should lay down the rules on education, the appointment of teams of lecturers, the assessment of knowledge and skills, as well as the rules on enrolment, study periods per country, the composition of examination boards and the award of credits under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), study grants and pedagogical and linguistic support for students.

With regard to the diploma, the French legislator explicitly indicates two possibilities: in the framework of international cooperation, the partner universities may jointly issue a single diploma or they may issue each university's own diploma at the same time. Experience has shown that it is currently difficult to issue a single joint degree due to country-specific legal requirements that the state diploma should meet. Undoubtedly, this could be an interesting area for agreement between countries and work towards standardising the technical and editorial aspects of degrees issued, e.g. at the European level.

In the context of Polish-French cooperation, we observe that all joint degree programmes that we are aware of end with two degrees – a degree issued by a French university and a degree issued by a Polish university (and, of course, three degrees in the case of trilateral cooperation). It also appears that a clear legal basis for this issue allows French partners to avoid the doubts that sometimes arise in the context of less detailed Polish regulations.

DOUBLE POLISH-FRENCH DEGREES

Joint study programmes and double degrees are one of the key tools for university cooperation between France and Poland. The first such programmes were established as early as the early 1990s (e.g. the Polish-French MBA programme: Management and Business Administration, established in 1993 between the University of Lodz and *Université Jean Moulin - Lyon 3*). Currently, there are approximately 70 programmes of double Polish-French degrees operating between universities throughout Poland and France. The most popular fields of study are management, engineering studies, languages, law, political science and physics. A total of nearly 350 students participated in them in the 2017/2018 academic year.

The vast majority of these programmes are at the master's level (88%), but there are also a few joint programmes already at the bachelor's level (10.5%), as well as one at the doctoral level. Nearly half of the programmes provide for a compulsory period of traineeship in the course of the studies. Some of them assume obligatory mobility, in which case the studies are partly realised in Poland and partly in France. However, there are also programmes where classes take place entirely in Poland – in such a case, lecturers from France come to teach at Polish universities. This is how, for example, classes are organised in the four existing French law schools in Poland, in Warsaw, Cracow, Łódź and Gdańsk, run in cooperation with universities in Poitiers, Orleans, Tours and Toulouse.

In many of these programmes, all or at least part of the courses are taught in French (this applies to approximately 65% of the programmes), so that students improve their knowledge of French and culture in addition to their field of study. However, there are also programmes where classes are taught entirely in English – this gives one the opportunity to study and gain a degree

from a recognised French university without the required knowledge of French. This applies mainly to courses such as management or engineering studies.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Institutional support for the development of joint study programmes and Polish-French double degrees includes activities of an informational, promotional and financial nature. It involves the French Embassy in Poland in cooperation with the French Institute in Poland, under the auspices of which the Polish branch of Campus France operates.

These institutions have been publishing a joint catalogue of Polish-French double degree programmes for several years now. At the beginning of 2021, its ninth edition was published, in the Polish-French language version. The catalogue is available online: (<https://www.pologne.campusfrance.org/pl/podwojne-dyplomy-polsko-French>). It makes it possible to systematically collect up-to-date information on all programmes existing at a given time and make them available in one place, thus giving a full picture of this type of educational offer to interested students from Poland and France. From the point of view of the institutions that issue it, it is also a kind of “link” with the universities implementing these programmes and an opportunity for regular contact allowing for an up-to-date source of knowledge about this type of cooperation between universities, its course, successes or possible difficulties.

In addition to the catalogue, an interactive map of double degrees was also created, which shows the location on the map of Poland of universities running joint studies with France, with a breakdown by field of study. The map is available on the website of the French Institute in Poland: (<https://www.institutfrancais.pl/pl/nasze-dzialania>).

The promotion of double degree programmes takes place within the activities of the Campus France Polska agency, which promotes French higher education and scientific cooperation with France. The joint study programmes are presented regularly during meetings organised during the year with Campus France representatives in schools, secondary schools and universities, as well as during Campus France Days in Poland, which take place every year from November to March. The 2019 edition of this event was attended by almost 30 secondary schools and universities from 22 cities across the country. In 2020, due to the sanitary situation, Campus France Days were held online, in the form of 15 thematic webinars and two workshop meetings, with a total of 800 participants. Apart from such meetings, current information on double degree programmes is also provided by e-mail, telephone or in person by representatives of Campus France working in Warsaw and Cracow.

In addition to information and promotional activities, institutional support for joint study programmes is also of a financial nature. It can be used both by institutions offering such education and by the programme participants themselves.

The French Embassy in Poland offers support in the form of subsidies for Polish-French double degree programmes. The funds obtained may be used for various types of expenditure, related, for example, to the mobility of staff, the organisation of scientific events or promotional activities for a given study programme. Only Polish universities can be formal beneficiaries, although applications are, of course, submitted in consultation with French universities. The call for applications is carried out every year, in March and April. Under the adopted strategy, the following criteria shall be taken into account when considering applications: the complementarity of programmes and innovative teaching methods, the link

Joint study programmes and double degrees are one of the key tools for university cooperation between France and Poland.

between the programme and the European University project, the link with research activities and cooperation with companies, co-financing of the programme from other sources, number of students. The total amount of funds earmarked for this purpose in 2020 was EUR 29,000 allocated for the implementation of 13 Polish-French joint study programmes.

An additional form of financial support are scholarships of the French government offered by the French Embassy in Poland. Participants in joint degree programmes at the master's level, in which the second year of study takes place as part of mobility and a stay in France, can benefit from this. Participation in a double degree programme is one of the important criteria to be taken into account (although obviously it does not automatically determine the award of a scholarship).

THE FATE OF GRADUATES

As many years of experience in this area have shown, joint study programmes and the resulting two degrees from Polish and French universities often prove to be the key to a successful professional career, but also to the further development of various types of Polish-French cooperation, whether in the professional or academic context.

Graduates of some of these programmes maintain contact with the university, as well as with each other, within the networks or groups set up at the programme level. This may be a contact in the form of less formal groups set up through social networks such as Facebook or LinkedIn, but also in the form of an association, an interesting example here is EMA-DOM, which brings together graduates of the already mentioned triple Europe Master degree between the universities in Opole, Dijon and Mainz (www.emadom.eu).

At the institutional level, a network of graduates of French universities in Poland – France Alumni Pologne – is available to graduates of Polish-French double degree programmes (<https://www.francealumni-ni.fr/pl/stanowisko/polska/>), operating under the auspices of the French Embassy and the French Institute in Poland. This network is part of France Alumni's international community established in 2016 by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (now: The Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs) and associating French university graduates worldwide. The network has a total of more than 100,000 members.

Membership in France Alumni Pologne is free of charge and offers the opportunity to keep in touch with France and use the experience of studying at a French university or living in France in a professional environment. Members of the network have access to internship and work offers relating to France or the French language, as well as to networking meetings.

In Poland, the network is open not only to graduates of double degree programmes, but also to graduates of all other studies at French or French-speaking universities, to scholarship holders of the French government and to graduates of the French Lyceum in Warsaw. Currently, there are over 1,300 members, a group of over 3,000 people on LinkedIn and over 2,800 people on Facebook.

The network also carries out various activities to present interesting profiles of French university graduates to support the choice of France as a place to study. Recently, for example, several interviews with graduates have been conducted in the form of short video films. Two graduates presented the benefits of the Polish-French double degree programmes in which they participated (<https://www.francealumni.fr/pl/stanowisko/polska/news/co-daja-studia-a-takze-s-taze-we-francji-6096>).

COTUTELLE DOCTORATES

A form of joint third-level study that is specific and original to France are the so-called cotutelle doctorates. They allow you to obtain a doctoral degree simultaneously in France and in another country. Formally, a doctoral student is admitted and studies within two doctoral schools, under the supervision of two supervisors from both countries, preparing one dissertation. The joint studies can result in a single, joint degree from both universities or two degrees from each university indicating that the doctorate was completed as a cotutelle with the respective partner university. The second solution is commonly used.

The basis for the implementation of this type of study is the agreement on joint scientific supervision over the doctoral dissertation (also known as a co-supervision agreement), signed between a French university and a foreign partner university. The agreement sets out the precise conditions for this type of cooperation, in particular the

programme and the periods of study in both countries, the language in which the doctoral dissertation is to be written, the place and language of the defence, the composition of the doctoral committee, the issues relating to the award of the degree or degrees. Universities usually have their own templates for this type of agreement, which are of course subject to negotiation and agreement with the partner university so that the agreement complies with the regulations for doctoral studies in both countries.

Cotutelle doctorates are also implemented in the context of Polish-French cooperation. Undoubtedly, their greatest value is the opportunity to carry out scientific work under the supervision of two supervisors, using their knowledge and expertise in a given field, within the framework of joint bilateral scientific cooperation. Experience shows that original, exceptionally interesting and in-depth scientific projects are usually created in this way, and the established Polish-French cooperation is often continued at subsequent stages of an individual's scientific work, but also serves to develop further cooperation between universities or research centres.

The French Embassy in Poland also supports this form of joint Polish-French studies, offering doctoral students scholarships from the French government for a period of three years, for a four-month stay in France each year. Almost 100 scholarships have been awarded over the last 10 years.

In addition, a particular form of the cotutelle doctorate and the associated scholarship is a doctorate carried out in collaboration with companies and industry. Such a doctorate supervised by a person associated with a given company (usually an employee of that company), and the topic of the dissertation is closely related to a scientific issue in the company's area of activity. The scholarship for the doctoral student is co-financed in a certain part by the company and the rest by the embassy. The

other conditions for this type of doctorate are the same as for all cotutelle. The Embassy has had very successful collaborations of this kind with the THALES company through two cotutelle doctorates, in the field of defence, transport and security.

Cotutelle doctorates are undoubtedly examples of one of the closest forms of cooperation in joint Polish-French studies. In French universities, it is quite common. On the Polish side, depending on the university, cotutelle doctorates are more or less known and implemented. It happens that signing an agreement on joint scientific supervision is associated with administrative and legal difficulties and, unfortunately, it does not always come to fruition. However, given the invaluable scientific benefits of this kind of cooperation, it is certainly worth making every effort to minimise the difficulties that arise and to make cotutelle doctorates increasingly widespread at Polish universities.

THE FRENCH EMBASSY AND FRENCH INSTITUTE IN POLAND

Amongst many other areas of activity, their task is to support and encourage academic and scientific cooperation between France and Poland, whether under bilateral or multilateral agreements or at the European level. To this end, among other things, they run a number of programmes addressed to French and Polish research teams interested in such cooperation; they organise a number of events on academic exchange and research; they award scholarships of the French government at the Master 2 level, PhD level and for research stays in France. Within the structures of both institutions, there is the Polish representative office of Campus France agency dealing with the promotion of French higher education and scientific cooperation with France and a club of graduates of French universities in Poland – France Alumni Pologne.



ONE DOCTORATE, TWO DEGREES NO EMPTY WORDS

MICHAŁ LIPIAN, PhD, BEng, specialises in applied aerodynamics (wind turbines, propellers). He has taken advantage of the many possibilities offered by cotutelle - the double Polish-French doctorate. For him, a trip to France means not only studies (double degrees, Master's and PhD) and scholarships (French government [BGF] and Eiffel), but also further scientific development.

I began my adventure with France as part of a Polish-French double degree in Master's studies at *Arts et Métiers Paris Tech* (ENSAM). In 2011/2012, I studied in Cluny and in 2014 in Paris. Support during the studies was a scholarship from the French government (*Bourse de Gouvernement Français, BGF*). Later, I spent more than a year in Paris as part of a Polish-French doctorate programme, doing research at ENSAM and the Lodz University of Technology. This formula, known as cotutelle, assumes the participation of two supervisors and obtaining two doctoral titles on the basis of only one dissertation and one defence (in this case it took place in Poland). The doctoral funding was possible thanks to projects on the Polish side (Diamant Grant) and the Eiffel scholarship on the French side. I am now continuing my cooperation with the French side within the framework of the Polish-French POLONIUM and LIDER XI projects which I manage.

Engineering research in France is extremely interesting. It is the country of projects such as the TGV, Airbus and Ariane, representing the highest level of mechanics and science in the world. Of course, I recommend Polish students to study in France, and scientists to cooperate in research with French universities. Firstly, because the level of studies and knowledge in France is very high. France is an international economic, engineering and high-tech power. Secondly, because after studying in France there are also many opportunities to work abroad or in French companies that are entering the market in Poland. Studying in France is also a good opportunity to see how the French economy works and to get a taste of French culture - and with these experiences to work in Poland or anywhere else in the world.

Lodz University of Technology
École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts et Métiers (ENSAM)

Czech experience in double-degree studies

JAKUB TESAŘ

Supporting international cooperation through strategic partnerships is one of the objectives of the *Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education* from 2021. This basic conceptual document on the internationalisation of higher education was adopted by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, MŠMT*) in 2020 as a complementary document to the Ministerial *Strategic Plan for Higher Education* from 2021.

The main objective was set out in the document as follows:

International strategic partnerships between universities, e.g. joint projects with an impact on study programmes or research, joint courses such as joint degrees or double or multiple degree programmes, and extended university alliances such as European Universities, which are based on strategically managed multi-level cooperation within organisations in both teaching and research and other areas, are a basic requirement for achieving high quality learning, research and innovation and for solving pressing global problems that transcend national borders.

Director of the Higher Education Department of the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research (since 2018). His department is responsible for the Erasmus+ programme in higher education and for the participation of incoming students in government and intergovernmental scholarship programmes. Through the Study in the Czech Republic initiative, he also promotes Czech universities abroad and supports their internationalisation. Previously, he worked in the Fulbright Commission, where he was responsible for the management of the US Education Centre. In 1998 he obtained a Master's degree at the University of Economics in Prague.



To support the development of double degree studies, the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research (*Dům zahraniční spolupráce, DZS*), together with the *MŠMT* and the local branch of Campus France, organised an online information seminar on such cooperation programmes in May 2020. The main issues discussed during the seminar are summarised below.

TYOLOGY OF DOUBLE DEGREE PROGRAMMES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The aim of the research project *Development and Quality Assurance of Joint Degree Courses Delivered in Cooperation with Foreign Higher Education Institutions*, carried out by a consortium of Czech universities led by Charles University (*Univerzita Karlova*) with support from MŠMT, was to describe the situation of joint degree courses in the Czech Republic and provide policy makers with information on which to base their decisions.

As the preliminary results of the study presented at the seminar have shown, Czech universities are currently pursuing three main types of courses, which they themselves see as double-degree studies.

The first type was referred to in the study as **structural mobility**. It involves collaboration within two independent fields of study without joint accreditation. Students are admitted to study at their home university and the partner universities enter into an agreement for the exchange of students at a specific stage of their studies. Students then complete two independent degrees (and two qualifications).

The second type is **closed courses**. It is the most common type of cooperation in higher education in the Czech Republic. It is analogous to the first type, but in this case the two fields of study are very similar to each other, which enables much closer cooperation. The agreement usually immediately specifies the study programme at both universities and how its elements will be implemented by each partner. Beyond this, however, each programme has its own accreditation, so that graduates receive two degrees and two qualifications.

Type three is the **joint field of study** model, where two institutions create a single field of study delivered jointly by them. The agreement is very detailed and describes many aspects of such a joint course, including the rights and obligations such as: a joint entrance exams, diploma exams and graduation requirements (e.g. defence of the diploma thesis). This type of study can lead to a double degree but a single qualification. The only reason for graduates to obtain two degrees (instead of one joint degree, which would be very natural in this case) is to avoid the complications related to the legislative differences between countries.

As can be seen, it is the different legal conditions in each country that are unequivocally identified as a factor playing a key role in the creation of joint and double degree courses. Differences in legislation on higher education, accreditation and qualifications, particularly for regulated professions, can be a significant obstacle to the creation and implementation of joint courses in the form of joint degrees or double degrees.

CHALLENGES FOR NATIONAL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

To a great extent, reflections on the legislative framework also apply to the Czech Republic. This is why it is so important for all institutions considering setting up joint or double degree courses to know the legal conditions in the Czech Republic.

As shown in the presentation of the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education (*Národní akreditační úřad pro vysoké školství, NAÚ*) at the above-mentioned seminar, the accreditation of joint and double degree fields of study does not differ significantly from the accreditation of domestic fields of study at a particular university. The same principles and criteria apply in both cases. However, there are certain requirements concerning joint studies. According to the Act on Higher Education, the

basic condition for creating a joint degree programme is signing an agreement between the partner universities. This agreement must cover certain specific aspects of cooperation, such as the rules for admission and completion of studies, the content of the diploma and the supplement to the diploma, and even the rights and obligations of students in both countries. Moreover, the agreement must clearly specify which part of the studies will be realised at a Czech university and which part abroad. Subsequently, national accreditation covers only those parts of the programme that are delivered at the local university, while the part of the programme delivered by the foreign partner is accredited in the partner's country. At the same time, information on the accreditation process in the partner country should be provided during the national accreditation procedure.

Only about 16 joint/double degree courses, mostly Master's degree courses of an academic nature, were accredited by the NAÚ between 2017 and 2020 as part of the accreditation of degree courses. In most cases, partner universities were located in Europe. This number may seem small, but at the same time dozens of joint/double degree courses have achieved institutional accreditation involving internal quality assurance procedures directly at the university.

From NAÚ's perspective, the biggest challenge is not the lack of quality of the studies, but as mentioned above, the differences between the rules, standards and requirements (administrative, technical and substantive) in the different countries. In addition, vocational degree courses have to deal with the difficulties of specific regulations relating to specific fields. Finally, differences in the internal procedures of specific partner institutions, including those related to quality assurance, can be a problem.

In this context, mention should be made of the so-called European approach to the evaluation of the quality of joint studies. According to the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), "this document, adopted by the European ministers responsible for higher education, is designed to facilitate external quality assurance of such courses – it sets out standards based on agreed tools from the European Higher Education Area, without applying additional national criteria. This is to facilitate the application of an integrated approach to quality assurance of joint courses, so that the approach faithfully reflects their joint nature". In particular, it is intended to "remove a significant obstacle to the creation of joint degrees by establishing standards for such programmes using the agreed tools of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and to facilitate an integrated approach to quality assurance for joint courses, so that the approach faithfully reflects their joint nature".

In summary, the vision set out in the European approach to quality evaluation of joint studies is that joint courses should be subject to separate accreditation, valid in all partner countries, by a single accreditation agency. The decision of that agency would then be approved by the other accreditation bodies.

However, the European approach to quality assurance of joint programmes has not been implemented in all EHEA countries. The Czech Republic belongs to those countries where this approach does not apply and therefore courses require accreditation by the national agency as described above.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants in the seminar, who included representatives of the local Campus France and the French embassy and two universities (*Česká zemědělská univerzita v Praze*, i.e. the Czech Agricultural University in Prague, and *Grenoble École de Management*, a French partner university), presented an example of well-functioning double degree courses. They have also made useful recommendations that can help universities to successfully develop double degree programmes.

First of all, it was mentioned how important it is to explain the added value of such studies and to point out the advantages they bring compared to a normal course run by a single institution. Usually a bottom-up approach, using personal contacts between university staff in a particular field, produces much better results than a top-down strategy.

The description of the objective of the joint field of study should also allow for the identification of the expected learning outcomes. They must be reflected in the clear structure and curriculum of the joint degree programme.

The next step is to find appropriate partners. A good and proven approach at this stage is to build on existing partnerships that have already resulted in positive experiences (e.g. within the Erasmus+ programme).

The next step in establishing valuable cooperation should be a thorough examination of the compatibility of the curricula in the respective fields of study run by the partner universities.

Both parties must then discuss, clarify and agree on the conditions (needs and requirements, including for admission and completion) conducive to the signing of the relevant agreement. A clear division of rights and responsibilities between the partner universities is crucial. A good inter-university agreement should cover e.g. budgeting

and funding issues, consortium structure (including governance and responsibilities of each university), quality assurance and faculty evaluation, course content and study principles, learning outcomes, admission and examination principles and even procedures in the case of discrepancies in internal regulations.

Of course, creating double degree courses is not an easy process and can take several years. Universities indicate that it takes them an average of three years to launch such studies. However, as a result, they can offer students new and attractive opportunities for academic, professional and personal development and increase the level of internationalisation of universities.

THE CZECH NATIONAL AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH (DŮM ZAHRANIČNÍ SPOLUPRÁCE, DZS)

A publicly funded organisation under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic. Its main objective is to facilitate international cooperation in the field of education and to encourage as many people and institutions as possible to engage in international activities. It provides information, advisory and analytical services to all target groups active in the field of education. Its main partners are schools and other educational institutions, non-profit organisations and enterprises, local authorities and private individuals – generally students, teachers, managers of all types of schools, youth workers, andragogists and all other professionals in the field. It is responsible for the administration of two large European education programmes, Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, and a number of other smaller programmes such as AIA, AKTION Austria – Czech Republic, Barrande Scholarship Programme, CEEPUS Agreement and EEA Funds. Furthermore, it is active in numerous international networks (eTwinning, Euroguidance, Eurydice, Eurodesk and EPAL) and runs the Study in the Czech Republic initiative, which encourages foreign students to study in the Czech Republic. It also deals with the issuance of certificates on the posting of Czechoslovak citizens to study at universities in the former Eastern Bloc countries before 1989.

HUNGARY

Joint studies in Hungary, fields of study: historical perspective and future prospects

MÁRTON BEKE, PHD

Head of the Higher Education Policy and Development Team, Tempus Public Foundation (Hungary). He studied humanities and obtained a PhD in philosophy (aesthetics). He conducted classes and research in literary and cultural studies, especially Bohemian and Central European Studies. Since 2012, he has worked in the Tempus Public Foundation and was involved in several European projects and worked as coordinator of the ECCE Mundus (Enhancing Cross-regional Cooperation in Erasmus Mundus) initiative, which consisted in promoting joint studies and cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Central Asia. He is currently responsible for the central activities of the Erasmus+ programme, including Erasmus Mundus and the European University initiative, the CEEPUS programme and EHEA projects. The PROFFORMANCE project, which is currently being implemented, aims to create an evaluation tool and incentive systems for university teachers. Dr Beke is also involved in internationalisation and policy development activities in higher education. He also participates in EHEA and European Commission working groups.



JOINT STUDIES: A NEW INITIATIVE OR EUROPEAN TRADITION?

I remember well a seminar on joint studies and double degrees organised in 2015 by the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) in Prague. We listened to a number of interesting presentations, but what I remember most was the speech by Professor Pavel Zgaga of the Ljubljana University, who gave a historical overview of university joint degree courses. Quite a number

of seminar participants were surprised that such international courses were priorities in the policies of many countries in Europe and beyond already 30-40 years ago. Throughout Europe there were similar aims, similar slogans and similar problems. One might ask whether joint or double degree studies are really a new initiative? And if, as we recognised at the time, they had not been permanently introduced into university reality by 2015, will they ever be part of everyday life in our universities?

THE HUNGARIAN PERSPECTIVE

The Erasmus Mundus programme was launched in 2004. By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, some Hungarian universities had taken an interest in this EU programme and had started to create international joint and double degree courses and obtained funding to run them. Some have succeeded in launching their first masters courses or doctorates under the Erasmus Mundus programme, but most universities have encountered nothing but problems: administrative obstacles, unclear regulations, difficulties within their own institutions – and this is just the beginning of the list. There was therefore a growing interest in the programme, but the success rate was lower than in many other countries or regions of the European Union.

After 2014, the integrated new Erasmus+ programme opened up many new opportunities: it created new synergies and helped universities to approach project planning in a strategic way. The Hungarian National Agency of the Erasmus+ programme (Tempus Public Foundation) has also included a number of other national, regional and international programmes in its offer, and was therefore able to propose a structured approach to various funding sources. Let us be clear: we know of many

cases where successful large-scale projects started with simple mobility agreements or short intensive programmes and, over time, developed into excellent joint Master's degree programmes or even prestigious scientific research.

STRATEGY, INTERNATIONALISATION AND SUCCESS

Hungary's higher education strategy, which was first unveiled in 2016, together with the increasing demand and funding made available for internationalisation have gradually resulted in changes in the approach also to joint studies. It also seems that conditions have improved over time: the increasing number of international students (a large proportion of whom benefited from the national *Stipendium Hungaricum* scholarship programme) has given the universities an incentive to expand the offer of neophilology courses and provide better services and more targeted recruitment and promotion. In short, it seems that some universities have raised their level of internationalisation and competitiveness.

We can confirm that by the end of the second decade of the 21st century, the number of joint courses was increasing, and Hungarian institutions were quite successful in establishing Erasmus Mundus joint Master's programmes – between 2014 and 2020 they had participated in 30 such programmes out of 250 selected master's courses. Given the size of the country, this result can definitely be regarded as a success. It has probably had a positive impact not only on specific institutions but also on the system as a whole.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Before attempting to analyse this impact, I will outline some factors at the national and European levels that have arguably contributed to the success of some joint degree courses.

1. Until 2013, the European Union had financed several projects aimed at promoting joint studies and creating foundations for the national structures of the Erasmus Mundus programme. Through such activities as ASEMUNDUS, ECCE MUNDUS, INTERUV, JOIMAN or Joint Degrees from A to Z (JDAZ) – agencies could provide applicants with in-depth knowledge and set up a network of national structures (later referred to as national agencies).
2. In order to maintain these activities, some national Erasmus+ agencies have decided to continue their cooperation. Thus the national agencies in Austria and the Czech Republic as well as in Hungary and Slovakia have organised annual Central European Joint Information Days, during which, among other things, training and information on joint studies is offered.
3. In 2016, the Hungarian Erasmus+ National Agency, together with the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, organised a training on Erasmus Mundus for countries with low participation in the programme (including Hungary and several other Central European countries). The success of the event was demonstrated by the number of applications accepted in the next call.
4. The Hungarian Erasmus+ National Agency offered interested applicants the opportunity of direct consultation and continuous support. It also attempted to identify and remove potential obstacles to the success of the proposals. It is still too often the case that many excellent and relevant ideas

are not implemented due to administrative barriers, lack of human resources or insufficient experience in writing proposals. It is therefore important to advise and support potential applicants, even though such activities are not the core tasks of the Agency.

5. Finally, discussions have been ongoing for some time with the relevant ministry and national organisations – the Office of Education (*Oktatási Hivatal, OH*), the Hungarian Rectors' Conference (*Magyar Rektori Konferencia, MRK*), the Hungarian Accreditation Board (*Magyar Felsőoktatási Akkreditációs Bizottság, MAB*) – regarding the creation of regulations that would facilitate the accreditation of joint degrees. These efforts have recently been greatly supported by the success of 11 Hungarian universities that are members of the consortia of European Universities: these pilot projects are such a political priority that their success is linked to strong support from the Member States and can give impetus to change even at a systemic level.

INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT

I do not want to create the impression that joint studies in Hungary are one big success story. For example, the 2019 survey found that the biggest challenges faced by universities applying to Erasmus+ central actions (not just Erasmus Mundus) included severe shortages of time and resources, administrative difficulties and problems with partners. The number of joint courses is significant, but not excessive. Nevertheless, these courses – not only Erasmus Mundus masters courses, of course – are present in Hungarian higher education, provide a strong foundation for the pilot phase of European Universities and undoubtedly have a significant impact on the institutions that deliver them.

Joint studies require very close and flexible cooperation, excellent communication between partners and a common strategic approach. This type of symbiosis is an asset for further cooperation of every kind (strategic mobility networks, development projects, research cooperation, etc.).

Recruiting, managing and teaching international students from all over the world also requires good and, above all, internationalised administrative procedures, services tailored to the needs of these students, and interaction between lecturers, staff and domestic students with the various groups of foreign participants in the programme. These changes have a positive impact not only on those participating in joint studies, but also on other students (incoming and domestic) and visiting teaching and research staff – virtually all participants in the internationalisation process.

Further mention must be made of the visibility and reputation attached to successful joint degree courses, especially those selected under the Erasmus Mundus action. Coordinators usually acknowledge that successful joint studies open doors and are often an affirmation of excellence – foreign students and potential institutional partners pay attention to such experiences as they testify to the high quality of the university. It is therefore no coincidence that the great majority of the 11 Hungarian universities belonging to the European Universities have experience in Joint Erasmus Mundus Masters programmes.

Of course, joint studies are not central to the life of the university and certainly not every course has the potential to become a joint course. This is not the objective either. However, the benefits of such studies are significant, despite the difficulties associated with management and implementation. Given the strategic objectives of the European Union and the EHEA, we can anticipate that joint degrees will play an increasingly important role in our higher education systems.

THE TEMPUS PUBLIC FOUNDATION (TEMPUS KÖZALAPÍTVÁNY)

A non-profit organisation established in 1996 by the Hungarian government to manage international cooperation programmes and projects in the field of education, training and EU-related activities. The aim of the Foundation is to support initiatives aimed at modernising and improving the quality of education, training and human resources development, to encourage international cooperation and mobility and to strengthen the European dimension in these fields.

The Foundation engages intensively in international activities in order to, on the one hand, encourage international institutions to cooperate with Hungarian partners and, on the other hand, to disseminate national achievements at the European level.

The Foundation's international activities include assistance in the search for partners, a guide for international students, teachers and researchers (available at www.studyinhungary.hu), participation in international projects and bilateral cooperation as partner or coordinator, an active role in dissemination projects funded by the European Commission, as well as active participation in the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy.

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**———— Joint studies
in Poland**

Introduction

AGNIESZKA PIETRZAK-KIRKIEWICZ

A biographical note can be found in the chapter on *The Internationalisation of Higher Education in the World and in Poland*, p. 23.

The analysis of existing data – materials, publications, reports from thematic conferences, websites of Polish higher education institutions – shows that joint degree programmes are becoming increasingly popular, but in comparison with many countries in Europe and the world, they are still a niche activity of our universities. Prior to the development of this publication, there was also no system for collecting data on joint studies in which Polish higher education institutions participate. The lack of aggregate information on this type of programme is a phenomenon that has also been observed for other countries in Europe and the world. In Poland, only partial data are known, such as, for example, a list of Polish-French double-degree programmes updated regularly by the French Embassy in Poland³⁶, or a list of Polish universities participating in Erasmus Mundus (now: the central action of the Erasmus+ programme Erasmus Mundus Joint Master). Other data are scattered and are usually found on university websites or as articles in publications on the internationalisation of universities or in the trade press.

NAWA has attempted to collect quantitative and qualitative data on joint and double degree studies conducted by Polish universities. Data were obtained in a pilot study in June 2020 on a sample of nine Polish universities. The second part of the survey took place in April and May 2021 and involved 118 universities. An analysis of the research can

be found in the chapter *Joint studies in Poland in the light of empirical research* later in this paper.

One of the manifestations of interest of Polish higher education institutions in joint degree programmes is their participation in the European programme Erasmus Mundus (2004-2013) and currently in the central action of the Erasmus+ programme Erasmus Mundus Joint Master. In the years 2004-2008, Polish universities participated in 12 out of 103 co-funded Erasmus Mundus joint degree projects, and in the years 2009-2013 – in 27 projects (including masters and doctoral studies) out of 250 co-funded by the European Commission³⁷.

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- 36 Ch. Paoli, *Podwójne dyplomy polsko-francuskie. Katalog*, 9th edition, French Embassy in Poland, 2021, <https://www.pologne.campusfrance.org/pl/podwojne-dyplomy-polsko-francuskie>, accessed: 4.05.2021.
 - 37 Erasmus Mundus website, erasmundus.org.pl, accessed: 10.02.2021.
 - 38 *Wspólne studia magisterskie Erasmus Mundus w programie Erasmus+*, Foundation for the Development of the Education System, 2020, <https://2014-2020.erasmusplus.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Polskie-uczelnie-w-EMJMDs-E.pdf>, accessed: 4.05.2021.
 - 39 *Udział polskich instytucji w akcjach centralnych programu Erasmus+. Statystyczne podsumowanie konkursów rozstrzygniętych w roku 2020 w sektorze szkolnictwa wyższego*, Foundation for the Development of the Education System, 2020, https://2014-2020.erasmusplus.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/HE_Akcje_centralne_2020_podsumowanie_wynikow.pdf, accessed: 4.05.2021.
 - 40 *Podwójne dyplomy filarem internacjonalizacji*, „Życie Uczelni” no. 145, Lodz University of Technology, 18.06.2018, <https://www.zu.p.lodz.pl/podwojne-dyplomy-filarem-internacjonalizacji>, accessed: 14.05.2021.

Project title:	Coordinating authority	Polish institution being a member of the consortium
Chemical Nano-Engineering	Universite d'Aix Marseille, France	Wrocław University of Science and Technology
European Master In Advanced Solid Mechanics	Universite de Lille, France	Wrocław University of Science and Technology
Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies	University of Glasgow, United Kingdom	Jagiellonian University
BIO&PHArmaCeutical Materials Science European Master	Universite de Lille, France	University of Silesia
Euroculture: Society, Politics and Culture in a Global Context	Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Netherlands	Jagiellonian University
Master in Applied Ecohydrology	Universidade do Algarve, Portugal	University of Lodz
Transition, Innovation and Sustainability Environments	Donau-Universität Krems, Germany	Poznań University of Economics and Business
NOHA Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree Programme in International Humanitarian Action	Universidad de la Iglesia de Deusto Entidad Religiosa, Spain	University of Warsaw

Source: https://2014-2020.erasmusplus.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/HE_Akcje_centra_2020_podsumowanie_wynikow.pdf, accessed: 4.05.2021.

Following the launch of the central action of the Erasmus+ programme Erasmus Mundus Joint Master, the involvement of Polish universities in projects of this type has steadily increased. In 2014, Polish institutions participated in two out of 11 funded joint degree programmes, in 2017, in seven out of 38 winning projects³⁸, and in 2020 they became partners in eight consortia out of 46 that received funding³⁹ to run Erasmus Mundus joint masters programmes (Table 3). Although Polish universities appreciate the advantages of participating in this European programme, their achievements are not particularly impressive. In particular, there are no projects in which Polish institutions would play a coordinating role.

The gradually growing interest in joint and double degree studies is evidenced by events organised in recent years. In 2018, the International Relations Offices Forum (IROs Forum) together with the Lodz University of Technology hosted the conference “Double Degree Programmes as a Pillar of International Strategic Partnerships”⁴⁰. During the meeting, the legal aspects and principles of functioning of double degrees in the perspective of the Act 2.0 - *Law on Higher Education* were discussed. There was also a workshop on double degree models in the world with the participation of representatives of prestigious foreign universities from Spain, France, Germany, Italy and

TABLE 3. Participation of Polish universities in joint Master degree programmes which received funding under the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programme in 2020

China, i.e. countries where double degree programmes work perfectly.

The need to explore knowledge in this area is also evidenced by workshops on the legal and organisational aspects of running joint degrees, offered by both public institutions and commercial companies. For example, there are two panels entitled: “Double degrees in light of the new law” for university representatives organised by NAWA and IROs Forum in December 2020 as part of the consultation workshop “Challenges and good practices in the area of internationalisation of higher education”⁴¹. As we read in the workshop report: conducting joint studies and issuing double degrees is a good way both to start a partnership and to consolidate it. This form of cooperation is of particular importance in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has restricted traditional academic mobility.

Although Poland is not a leader in the field of joint studies, real gems can be found in this area. One example are the double degree programmes run since 2010 by the Warsaw School of Economics (SGH) (12 Master’s programmes and 4 Bachelor’s programmes)⁴². These courses are successful on the international stage. The Master’s double degree programme with *Technische Universität Berlin* (TUB) is ranked 62nd in the world in the Eduniversal Best Masters Ranking 2019 in the area of entrepreneurship. High scores can also be found in the regional part of the ranking (Eastern Europe region) – the programme conducted jointly with the European University Viadrina is ranked 9th in the area of accounting, while the programme conducted with the Gutenberg School of Management and Economics, Gutenberg University Mainz is ranked 7th in the category of corporate finance.

An example of the Polish university’s participation in a prestigious joint degree programme is SGH’s membership in CEMS – The Global Alliance in Management Education, a global alliance formed by 34 schools

of economics and their corporate partners, which runs a joint CEMS Masters in International Management programme⁴³. The association trains leaders who are able to move efficiently in an international and multicultural business environment. Only one university from a given country may belong to the alliance. In 2020 CEMS was ranked 13th among the top 90 management programmes in the world according to the Masters In Management ranking published annually by the *Financial Times*. We write about the experience of participating in the CEMS programme in the section prepared by Grzegorz Augustyniak.

The prestigious T.I.M.E. Association network⁴⁴ includes the Wrocław University of Science and Technology and the AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow. T.I.M.E. is a group of 57 universities from 25 countries in Europe, Australia, North America and South America and China, which conducts the double degree programme Top Industrial Managers in Engineering. The primary objective of the programme is bicultural education in cooperation between associated universities, leading to a double degree. A longer stay at a partner university (2 years) and studying in the language of the partner are supposed to provide a better insight into the culture and customs of the country in question. Approximately 500 students per year are estimated to participate in the double degree programme. More about the programme in the article by Ewa Mroczek from the Wrocław University of Science and Technology. Another example of joint studies is the participation of the University of Warsaw in the elite international Network on Humanitarian Action

(NOHA), which develops humanitarian education. Since the 2015/2016 academic year, students of the University of Warsaw can participate in the NOHA international master's education programme, earning a degree at two universities. There are currently 12 prestigious European universities in the NOHA network. For more on the Polish experience in implementing NOHA studies, see the article co-authored by Patrycja Grzebyk and Elżbieta Mikos-Skuza.

A model example of joint studies in the European Union is the Euroculture programme⁴⁵, initiated in 1999, in which the Jagiellonian University participates as the only Polish university. This two-year master's programme is the result of cooperation between eight European universities and four non-European universities where students can undertake research internships. Euroculture focuses on socio-cultural issues. The focus is both on European cultural heritage and European values and the development of European civil society⁴⁶. The programme was awarded the prestigious Erasmus Mundus Master of Excellence label by the European Commission in 2005, 2011 and 2017.

Another opportunity for Polish universities to develop in the area of creating joint degree programmes and to draw on the knowledge and experience of the best academic institutions in Europe is the European Union's European University Programme. The idea itself is the brainchild of the French President Emmanuel Macron, who in 2017 proposed the creation of a network of European universities with joint study programmes, degrees, conducting advanced research together. In two competitions (decided in 2019 and 2020), 41 consortia, i.e. European Universities, received grants and 11 Polish universities are participating. These include the Poznań University of Technology, which is the leader of EUNICE⁴⁷ (European University for Customised Education). Each beneficiary network can count on a three-year grant funded by the

Erasmus+ (maximum €5 million) and Horizon 2020 (maximum €2 million) programmes. Joint research groups, technology transfer centres and libraries, among others, will benefit from the funds. The aim will also be to increase the mobility of staff and students. The latter, within a single course of study, will be able to benefit from the offer of the co-consortium⁴⁸.

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- 41 *Nowe trendy w umiędzynarodowieniu uczelni w rzeczywistości post-COVID*, National Agency for Academic Exchange, 1.03.2021, <https://nawa.gov.pl/nawa/aktualnosci/nowe-trendy-w-umiędzynarodowieniu-uczelni-w-rzeczywistosci-post-covid>, accessed: 14.05.2021.
- 42 More about the experience and success of the Warsaw School of Economics in running double degree programmes and a set of practical advice for universities interested in a joint or double degree programme: I. Bergel, *Dobre praktyki w ustanawianiu i realizacji programów podwójnego dyplomu w świetle dziesięcioletnich doświadczeń ich oferowania w SGH*, in: K. Górak-Sosnowska, K. Kacperczyk, *Umiędzynarodowienie szkolnictwa wyższego. Strategie, wyzwania i dobre praktyki*, SGH, Warsaw 2020, 141.
- 43 More about the CEMS programme: G. Augustyniak, *CEMS - Globalny program dla globalnych obywateli*, in: K. Górak-Sosnowska, K. Kacperczyk, *Umiędzynarodowienie szkolnictwa wyższego. Strategie, wyzwania i dobre praktyki*, SGH, Warsaw 2020, 165.
- 44 T.I.M.E. Association, <https://timeassociation.org>, accessed: 14.02.2021.
- 45 Euroculture, <https://euroculture.wsmip.uj.edu.pl>, accessed: 19.02.2021.
- 46 Z. Mach, *Program magisterski Master of Arts in Euroculture*, in: W. Martyniuk, *Internacjonalizacja studiów wyższych*, FRSE, Warsaw 2011.
- 47 EUNICE, the European University for Customised Education, <https://eunice-university.eu/>, accessed: 19.02.2021.
- 48 *Pięć polskich „Uniwersytetów Europejskich”*, „Forum Akademickie”, 26.06.2019, <https://forumakademickie.pl/sprawy-nauki/piec-polskich-universytetow-europejskich/>, accessed: 19.02.2021.

Joint studies in Poland in the light of empirical research

MARCIN JEWDOKIMOW, PHD, DSC
Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński
University in Warsaw (UKSW)

Sociologist, culture expert, evaluator, Professor at the UKSW. He works at the Faculty of Humanities of UKSW, Head of the Department of Culture of the 20th and 21st centuries at the Institute of Classical Philology and Culture (WNH UKSW). Author and co-author of several sociological and cultural books on religion, habitation or cultural participation, e.g.: B. Walczak, M. Jewdokimow, F. Pazderski, *Praktyki uczestnictwa w kulturze wśród ludności wiejskiej. Studium socjologiczne*, Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warsaw 2016; X. Bukowska, M. Jewdokimow, T. Quartier (ed.), *A Visual Approach to the Study of Religious Orders. Zooming in on monasteries*, Abingdon, Routledge, New York 2019; S. Palmisano, I. Jonveaux, M. Jewdokimow (ed.), *The Transformation of Religious Orders in Central and Eastern Europe Sociological Insights*. Abingdon, Routledge, New York 2021 – and scientific articles, including on evaluation and cultural institutions. Participant in evaluation and cultural participation research, analysis and training.

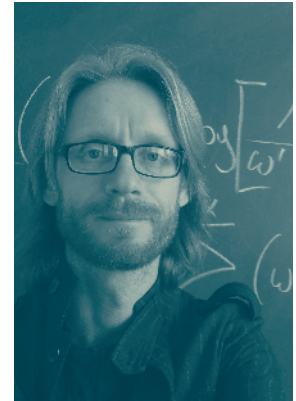


Joint studies are an interesting research problem within higher education studies. On the one hand, they symbolise the values with which today's academy is associated: emphasis on student mobility, transnational cooperation between academic and administrative staff, co-creation of the learning environment in a transnational space. On the other hand, they show the magnitude of the research and administrative challenges – from the problems of classification in the existing systematics created for national education systems, through the vagueness of definitions, which will be discussed later on, to the difficulties of interpreting, applying and reconciling regulations created in different countries.

The study presented below is an abridged version of the partial reports from the survey conducted on behalf of NAWA in April and May 2021 and the pilot study in June 2020. It is the first attempt at a comprehensive look at joint studies co-conducted by Polish universities with foreign entities. In the first part, we present a description of the methodology of the study, while in the following part we analyse the data organised in the logic of the main research questions.

BARTŁOMIEJ WALCZAK, PHD, DSC,
University of Warsaw

Sociologist, cultural anthropologist. He works at the University of Warsaw. Research interests: sociology of education, in particular change, participation, evaluation in education, prevention, impact of mobility on the functioning of different social institutions. Author of numerous expert opinions and studies, including for the Ombudsman for Children's Rights, OECD, OSCE, Ombudsman, Copernicus Science Centre, POLIN Museum, Ministry of Education, Education Development Centre, National Centre for Culture, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, FRSE, Multicultural Centre (Czech Republic), Stefan Batory Foundation, CSM, Public Education Evaluation Commission (Saudi Arabia), local and educational institutions. Author of *Antropolog jako Inny. Od pierwszych badań terenowych do wyzwania ponowoczesnej antropologii* (Scholar, 2009) and *Rodzina transnarodowa - konteksty i implikacje* (Scholar, 2016); co-author of 4 books and over 60 other scientific publications, which appeared in national and foreign magazines, including "Anthropology Matters", "Kultura i Społeczeństwo", "Konteksty". Head and participant in approximately 100 Polish and international research and evaluation projects.



METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The study was designed in a mixed strategy, combining nationwide surveys among higher education institutions and in-depth interviews with representatives of intentionally selected universities.

The quantitative component was implemented using the CAWI technique (Computer Assisted Web-based Interview) from 14 April to 10 May 2021. Invitations were sent to 387 universities operating in the academic year 2020/2021, in accordance with POL-on system data. Missing addresses were filled in manually based on university websites. The questionnaires, addressed to the primary address of the university, requested that they be forwarded to the person/unit coordinating joint degree programmes at the university or, if there was no such person/unit, to the person or office in charge of coordinating didactics or cooperation with foreign countries.

The response rate was 30%. Questionnaires were returned by 118 universities, including the nine units that took part in the pilot project in 2020 and were asked to update their data. The survey used

conditions based on two variables: (1) the provision of joint studies in the history of the University, (2) the provision of joint studies in the academic year 2020/2021. As a result of this, and as a result of the inclusion of pilot data and missing responses as described above, the counts obtained for each question will differ.

It should be stressed that the sample thus collected is random and does not entitle generalisation. Surveys were obtained from representatives of 36 higher vocational schools, 17 universities, 16 technical universities, 13 economic, 11 artistic, seven medical, six sport colleges, six pedagogical

universities, three ministry of national defence or internal affairs and administration, three agricultural and two theological. The 11 universities classified as “other” include units providing first-or second-cycle programmes which do not have university status. Two thirds of the higher education institutions (84) which participated in the study are public universities.

The nine universities that participated in the pilot survey conducted by NAWA in June 2020 were excluded from the questionnaire. The universities invited to participate in the pilot project completed an extensive survey consisting of a quantitative and qualitative component. They were asked to update their data during the 2021 main survey. These data are included in this report.

As far as the qualitative component is concerned, the primary objective set for this part of the research project was to deepen the knowledge on the specifics of the implementation of joint degree programmes at universities with significant experience in this field. In total, 10 in-depth individual interviews of an average duration of 60 minutes were conducted. The selection of units and employees was targeted. Universities with extensive experience in joint degree programmes were sought – varying in size, location and type of degree programmes pursued. Therefore, public universities located in different voivodeships, polytechnics, technical universities, universities and medical universities took part in the study. Due to the epidemic, all interviews were carried out remotely, via teleconferencing platforms.

The persons invited to participate in the interview included: academic staff responsible for the development of the course in question, persons holding positions at the university and administrative staff dealing with studies of this type at the university. They were selected on the basis of the criterion of their knowledge about joint studies at a given university.

All data presented in the study below have been anonymised.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

SD - standard deviation, i.e. an indicator showing how dispersed the results are

M - arithmetic mean

n - sample size

CAWI (Computer Assisted Web-based Interview) – a questionnaire sent electronically, in this case completed individually by the respondents

IDI - individual in-depth interview

JOINT STUDIES: DEFINITION CHALLENGES

From an emic perspective⁴⁹, joint studies are an undefined and ambiguous area; the respondents did not present an unambiguous and common understanding of the term. There is a predominance of indications of studies resulting from the joint development of a study programme or the establishment of compatibility of field of study learning outcomes by two or more universities from different countries. This joint preparation of the programme translates into students undertaking studies at both their home and partner universities (the mobility component), culminating in a double or joint diploma. However, the practice of implementing such studies by the same universities shows that they include various activities in this category – also studies initiated under the Erasmus Mundus programme, studies conducted by two Polish universities, as well as studies where only students from one unit remain mobile, completing part of their study programme at the host university. The following statement is representative of this understanding of joint studies:

Prepared jointly and run by the consortium. Each of these institutions must declare that it recognises all

activities assigned to the programme (classes, credits, etc.) in formal and qualitative terms. There must be common principles and methods. This must lead to a joint or double degree – in our case it was double because of Polish legislation. [IDI2]⁵⁰

Another issue are situations identified by the respondents where, in their opinion, a clear categorisation error has occurred, either in relation to the studies themselves (treating student exchange as joint studies) or in relation to the terminology associated with the degree (calling a double degree a joint degree):

The nationwide state of knowledge is bad. Four years ago, I was at a conference on joint studies at which it turned out, despite declarations, that universities were not conducting joint studies and did not issue joint degrees. Many universities boasted that they were doing this, although it was not the case. This was due to the prestige of this form. [IDI1]

The respondent cited above points out, firstly, the prevalence of miscategorisation and secondly, that the error is partially made deliberately, because naming such studies joint degree programmes raises the prestige of the university and the programme itself.

The respondents are therefore aware of the problems of definition, and during the interviews were keen to point out what they think joint studies are not:

Two universities agree that the content of the entire course of study will be such and such. [...] Sending students to particular courses in order to obtain a degree from a given university is not a joint degree programme. In my opinion, universities have to work on the programme from the outset. And when you have students from different years, different studies, who even defend their thesis at another

university, then the programme is not a joint one. [IDI3]

Thus, for the respondents a jointly developed source concept is crucial in defining joint studies.

The problems are also related to the definition of joint and double degrees, although the difficulties are smaller in this case. While the respondents agreed that a joint degree is a single document issued by two or more universities, and that double degrees are two documents certifying the completion of studies and issued by two different universities at the end of a given study cycle, there were cases when a double degree was referred to as a joint degree in official documents – such a situation resulted from the assumption that joint studies must end with a joint certificate:

We always issue two degrees (we issue one and they issue another one) and call them joint degrees; our degree says it's a joint degree. [IDI5]

However, this was an isolated voice, with the majority of respondents indicating that joint studies could result in a joint or double degree:

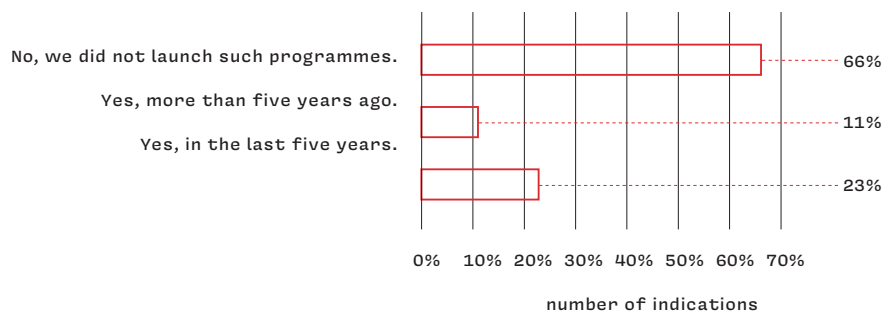
Joint degree – completing the programme, accredited in all partner countries.

Double degrees – separate documents that indicate the completion of a given programme. [IDI3]

The respondents were not sure whether joint degrees could be issued in Poland under the applicable law. Most indicated that for formal reasons this was not possible, and thus they issued double degrees. There were also voices that in connection

⁴⁹ A term introduced by the linguist Kenneth Pike in the late 1960s. It is commonly used in cultural anthropology to denote theoretical concepts derived from the conceptual system of the subjects, as opposed to ethical strategy, which is based on categorisation brought in from outside by the researcher.

⁵⁰ Quotes from surveys are given in their original form, without editing or proofreading – ed. note.



Source: own study based on the CAWI survey, n=127

with Act 2.0 this was possible⁵¹, but they opted for double degrees because issuing joint degrees was a “time-consuming process and the double route is easy” [IDI9].

One university issues joint degrees – as it calls them – although at the same time its representative is aware that “we are actually issuing something that is not legally regulated, but this does not prevent students from getting a job or taking up other studies” [IDI7]. These diplomas have an interesting design – miniature diplomas of the participating universities are placed on one document:

The joint degree reflects the diplomas of separate universities. A miniature version of the universities’ diplomas [were prepared - MJ, BW] and were signed by the relevant authorised persons. [IDI7]

In conclusion, there is a polyphony concerning both joint studies and joint degrees, which becomes clearer if we look not only at the assumed definitions but also at institutional practices. The respondents indicated varying levels of knowledge regarding joint degrees, referring both to themselves and others and to the situation before and after the introduction of Act 2.0. According to the respondents, the state of knowledge on the subject is low and there is a lack of clear communication. In addition, legal advisors at universities also make their own interpretations of all regulations, which

results in a lack of uniform interpretation. Thus, it is not so much a lack of knowledge, but the lack of a unified and clearly communicated interpretation that contributes to this state.

The respondents also indicated that the preparation of a model of such a diploma at the central level would facilitate the issuance of joint degrees.

SCALE

Less than 34% of the universities (43 units out of 127 surveyed) ran joint degree programmes, of which around two-thirds (29 units) in the five years preceding the survey. As indicated by the analysis of the answers to the open question about the reasons for not conducting such studies, four universities, that currently do not offer such programmes, have made unsuccessful attempts to launch joint studies in the past, and another 13 plan to launch them in the future.

Status is an important factor, with 39% of public universities in the sample having launched joint degrees in the past compared to less than 14% of non-public universities.

DIAGRAM 9. Distribution of the respondents’ answers to the question “Has your university launched/run joint study programmes in co-operation with a foreign partner?”

		Yes, in the last five years.	Yes, more than five years ago.	No, we did not launch such programmes.	Total
type of university	University	n 6	5	6	17
		% 35.3%	29.4%	35.3%	100.0%
	Technical University	n 10	2	4	16
		% 62.5%	12.5%	25.0%	100.0%
	Agricultural University	n 1	1	1	3
		% 33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	100.0%
	Economic University	n 4	1	8	13
		% 30.8%	7.7%	61.5%	100.0%
	Pedagogical University	n 0	0	6	6
		% 0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Medical college or university	n 2	0	5	7
		% 28.6%	0.0%	71.4%	100.0%
	Academy of Physical Education	n 0	1	5	6
		% 0.0%	16.7%	83.3%	100.0%
	Artistic University	n 0	0	11	11
	% 0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Theological University	n 0	0	2	2	
	% 0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
University of the Ministry of National Defence or the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration	n 1	0	2	3	
	% 33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	100.0%	
Higher vocational school	n 3	3	30	36	
	% 8.3%	8.3%	83.3%	100.0%	
Other universities	n 2	1	4	7	
	% 28.6%	14.3%	57.1%	100.0%	
Total	n 29	14	84	127	
	% 22.8%	11.0%	66.1%	100.0%	

Source: own study based on the CAWI survey

The second factor is the size – the average number of students at the universities running the programmes we are interested in was 15,589 (SD=12,519.1) compared to 3,490 (SD=4985.7) for the others⁵².

Looking at the breakdown by university type, it can be noted that proportionally most joint degree programmes were launched by technical universities (12 out of 16 participating universities), agricultural universities (two out of three, however, it is worth noting the low number of this type of university) and universities (11 out of 17). Among economic universities, otherwise ranked high in terms of the number of such programmes and graduates, joint degree providers accounted for about a third. Of the other more numerous types of universities: joint studies are rare in higher vocational schools.

One sixth of them (six out of 36) conducted such programmes. A similar proportion was obtained for physical education academies (one of six). Medical universities conducted joint degree programmes proportionally more often (two out of seven). Artistic universities, relatively well represented in the sample (11 units), are an interesting case – none of them declared the launch of joint degree programmes. Similarly, the lack of joint studies on offer was indicated by representatives of pedagogical and theological universities.

DIAGRAM 10. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "Has your university launched/run joint study programmes in co-operation with a foreign partner?" by type of university

⁵¹ In fact, this is the case - cf. Article 60 of the Act.

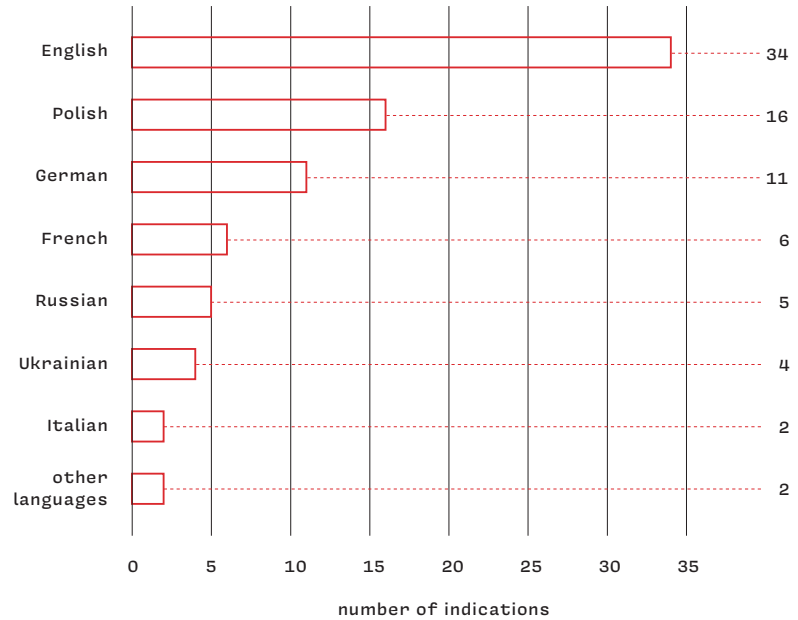
⁵² It should be added that these factors are interlinked. Public universities are generally larger entities. The state universities in the sample had an average of 8,744 students, while the non-public universities had 3,060.

The number of joint degree programmes run by individual units varied from one to as many as 89 since the first agreement was signed. The largest proportion – about two-thirds of the programmes described -- were run at the master’s level, 28% at the bachelor’s level, and just over six per cent at the doctoral level. Similarly, the number of graduates (calculated jointly for Polish and foreign universities) varies. Some universities reported (literally) individual graduates, with a maximum of 17,098 (this number includes graduates of networks of partner universities participating in the programme). The majority of graduates are students from Poland: 65.6% for first-cycle and 68.9% for second-cycle studies. It is worth noting that the data is fragmented – not all universities participating in the study provided full data.

The dispersion in the number of programmes and graduates results, on the one hand, from the comparison in the sample of universities running programmes in different faculties with less internally diverse units, and on the other hand, to the different duration of these programmes.

The largest number of programmes – on average 17.8 (SD=24.3) – were conducted at technical universities. Universities ranked second with an average of 10.36 (SD=10.19), while economic universities ranked third (M=7.2; SD=8.75). Then there were medical universities (M=3; SD=1.41), agricultural (M=1.5; SD=0.7) and vocational (M=1.16; SD=0.57).

The highest number of joint degree graduates – an average of 3,423 (SD=7,644.56) – was declared by economic universities, but the result in this case is distorted by one unit that reported an exceptionally high number of graduates (17,098). Medical universities ranked second (M=685; SD=965.9), followed by technical universities (M=171.25; SD=423.09) and universities (M=139.72; SD=212.66). The average number of graduates from joint degree



Source: own study based on the CAWI survey, universities experienced in conducting joint studies, n=43

Source: * Multiple choice question, indications do not add up to the sample size.

programmes of higher vocational schools was 31 (SD=48.33), while in agricultural universities it was 28 (SD=38.18).

The most frequently indicated language in which the classes were taught during the joint studies (34 indications at 43 universities) was English. Apart from that, the only recurring indication was Polish (16 units) and German (11). The other languages – French, Russian and Ukrainian – were indicated by no more than six universities. Two units indicated Italian. Other languages (two universities) included Japanese, Chinese and Swedish.

Looking at the programmes by discipline, there is a strong representation of management and quality sciences (11 programmes), mechanical engineering (nine), automation, electronics and electrical engineering, and environmental engineering, mining and energy (seven each). There were six programmes in linguistics, architecture and urban planning, economics and finance,

DIAGRAM 11. Distribution of the respondents’ answers to the question “In which languages (this refers to the mandatory languages for the participant) is/was the education provided during the study?”*



Source: own study based on the CAWI survey, universities experienced in conducting joint studies, n=43

computer science, and physical sciences each, and five programmes in technical computer science and telecommunications and chemical engineering.

Four programmes have been assigned to civil engineering/transportation, materials engineering, mathematics and chemical sciences, while three each to medical sciences, legal sciences and agriculture

and horticulture. Other disciplines include two or one programme.

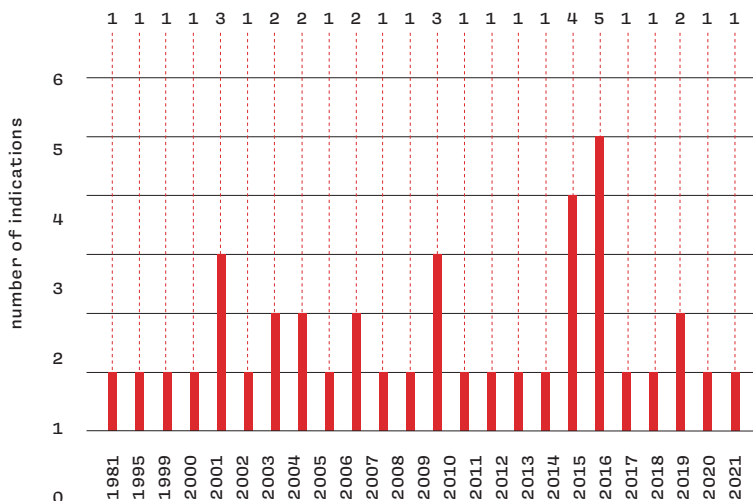
The experience of surveyed universities in conducting joint studies varies. The average time since the first agreement was signed is 12.5 years, with the oldest agreement dating back to 1981 and the newest in 2021. It can be seen that most universities signed their first agreements in the second

DIAGRAM 12. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question: "Please name the scientific disciplines to which the programmes implemented by your university can be assigned"

decade of the 21st century. This compares with 14 units between 2000 and 2009.

The average time from signing the first agreement was the longest in technical universities ($M=15.75$; $SD=10.08$), followed by economic universities ($M=12.66$; $SD=12.22$), medical universities ($M=10$; $SD=14.14$), in higher vocational schools ($M=9$; $SD=7.32$) and the shortest in universities ($M=8.66$; $SD=5.23$). Public universities have longer average tenure ($M=12.32$; $SD=8.34$) than non-public universities ($M=5$; $SD=4.38$).

Data on the proportion of graduates in the total group studying in joint or double degree programmes was obtained from only 21 universities. After excluding the three universities that launched such studies



Source: own study based on the CAWI survey, universities experienced in conducting joint studies, $n=43$

DIAGRAM 13. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "In which year did your university launch (sign an agreement for) its first joint study programme with a foreign partner?"

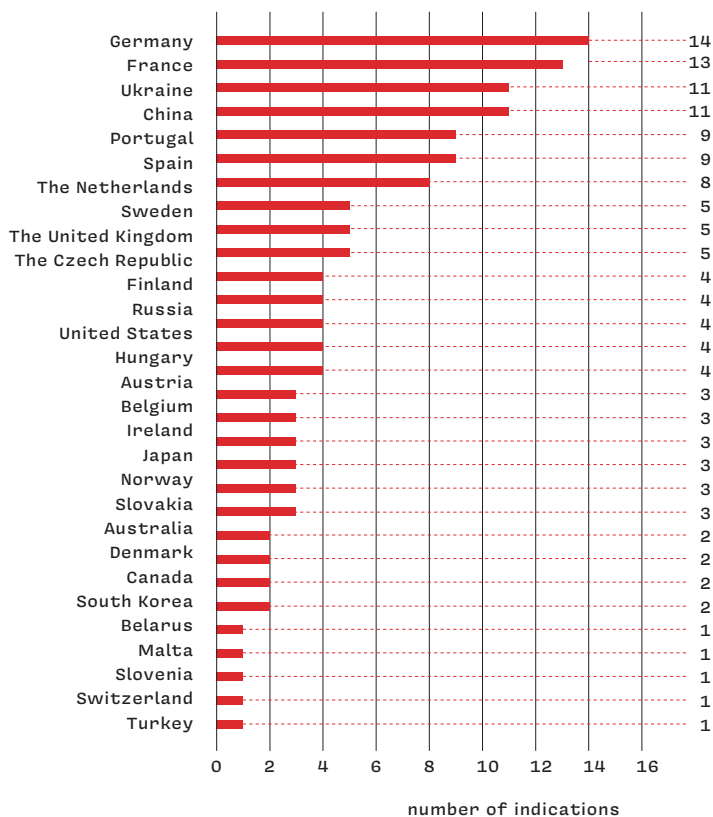


DIAGRAM 14. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "Please provide the countries of origin of the foreign partners of your university implementing joint study programmes in the academic year 2020/2021"

Source: own study based on the CAWI survey, universities conducting joint studies in the academic year 2020/2021, $n=31$
* Multiple choice question, indications do not add up to 100.

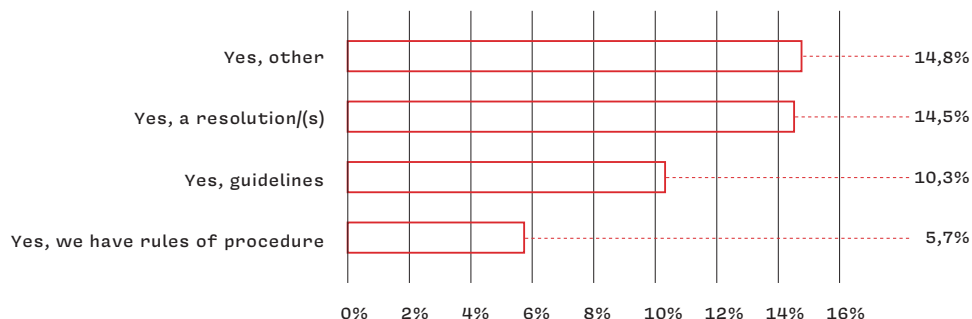
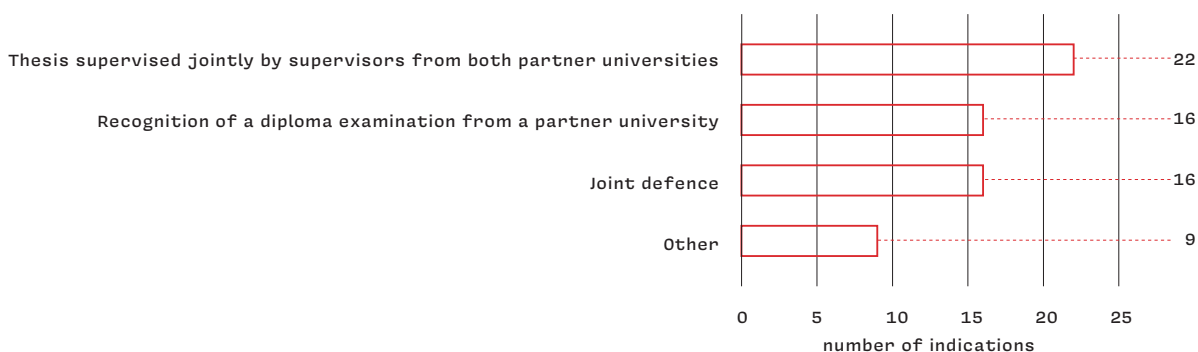


DIAGRAM 15. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "Do the documents of your university include provisions on establishing and conducting joint degree programmes?"*

Source: own study based on the CAWI survey, n=126
* Multiple choice question, indications do not add up to 100.



Source: own study based on the CAWI survey, universities experienced in conducting joint studies, n=43
* Multiple choice question, indications do not add up to 100.

DIAGRAM 16. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "What are/were the rules for the final awarding of qualifications within the framework of the joint degree implemented by your university?"*

recently and could not close a full cycle of study, the fraction eventually amounted to 18 units.

In this group of universities, the average proportion of students who successfully completed a joint or double degree programme was 80% (median 87.5%), with a maximum of 100% and a minimum of 40%. It is worth noting that half of the universities that responded to this question had a completion rate of 87.5% or higher. It was not possible to observe an association of this variable with the status, type, size of university or with experience of conducting joint degree programmes (estimated from the date of signing the first agreement).

JOINT STUDIES IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/2021

In the academic year 2020/2021, 31 universities conducted 1-54 programmes as part of joint studies. The average number of programmes was 7.57 - in the same group of 31 universities, the total average number of programmes, covering previous years, was 11.97, which indicates a drop in the number of programmes.

Joint studies in the academic year 2020/2021 are conducted in partnership with 1-45 foreign universities (9.23 on average). These universities are located in different countries, including non-European countries, but the top five most represented

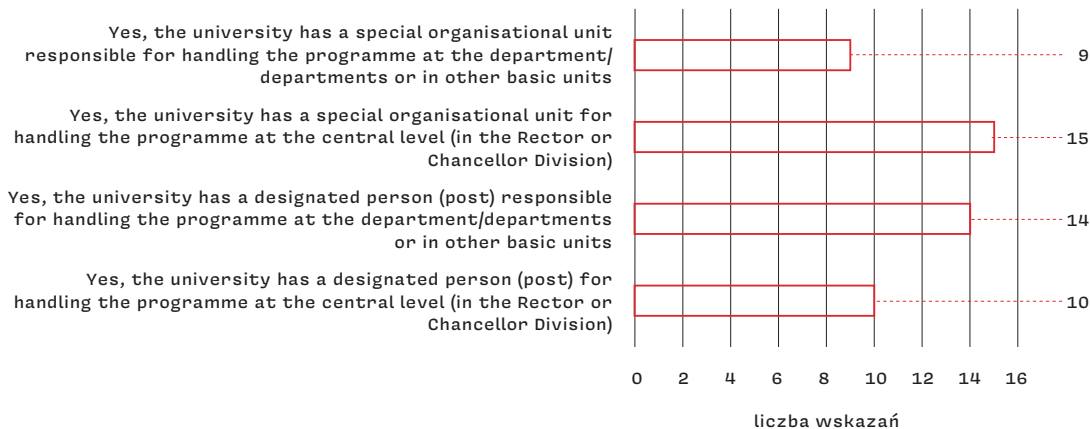


DIAGRAM 17. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "Does your university have a designated person and/or organisational unit (e.g. an office) which assists in providing services to students undertaking or interested in this form of study?"*

Source: own study based on the CAWI survey, universities experienced in conducting joint studies, n=43
 * Multiple choice question, indications do not add up to 100.

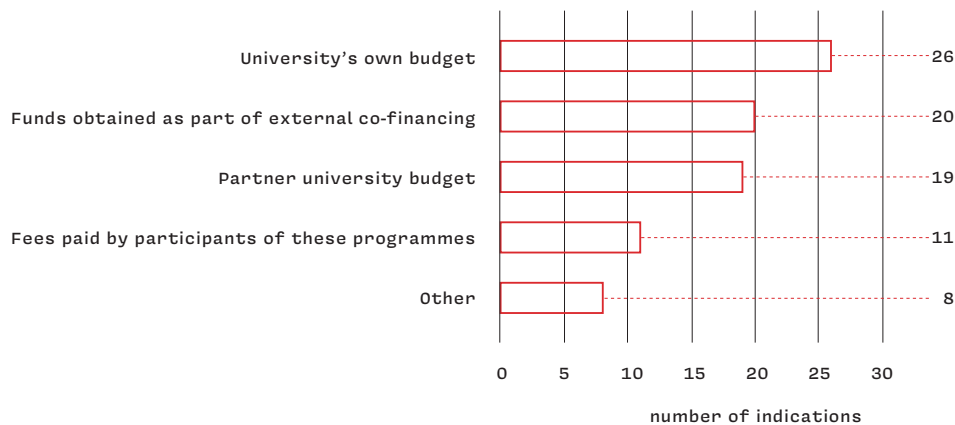


DIAGRAM 18. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "What were the sources of funding for the programme and support for participants' participation?"*

Source: own study based on the CAWI survey, universities experienced in conducting joint studies, n=43
 * Multiple choice question, indications do not add up to 100.

are European countries: Germany (14 partners), France (13), Italy (11), Ukraine (11) and Portugal (nine). China ranked ex aequo with Portugal (nine indications), followed by: Spain (eight), United Kingdom, Sweden and the Netherlands (five each).

THE ORGANISATION OF JOINT STUDIES

Out of 127 universities surveyed, 46 (36%) have records on joint studies in their documentation. Another 18 units (14% of the sample) indicated resolutions, 13 (10%) guidelines. Regulations were introduced in seven higher education institutions (5.5%). Of the 14 indications in the "other" category, 11 relate to agreements with partners and three to the university's statutes.

The most frequent method of awarding qualifications under the joint studies programme was co-supervising the diploma thesis by supervisors employed at both partner universities (22 units), followed by a joint examination (16) and – ex aequo – recognition of the examination conducted at the partner university (16). The “other” category included the details presented in the analysis below the chart.

The respondents drew attention to differences in the rules for awarding qualifications depending on the programme:

Generally, each agreement has slightly different rules – nevertheless, when it comes to programmes with the Ukrainian side, for example, students participating in the programme receive two diplomas of graduation from the Home University [...] and the Partner University. Students pursuing studies under this agreement prepare and defend their diploma theses at the Home University and the Partner University [CAWI]. It all depends on the programme. There is one joint degree option, most offer separate degrees issued by partners [CAWI].

As regards the verification of compliance of joint degree programmes with the Polish Qualifications Framework (PRK), universities did not indicate any problems in this area. It was found that the programmes of these studies were established taking into account the PRK and that compliance was ensured from the outset. One university indicated that it has a special IT programme that ensures full compliance through verification already at the level of study creation:

There is no problem if the candidates are from the EU, because the PRK is compatible with the others. There are only a few countries in the EU where the degrees are different, e.g. Ireland. The differences mean that we have to work out some mechanism, e.g. when recruiting people without a Polish

school-leaving exam (matriculation exam certificate) we estimate the results and average them. [IDI8]

In the organisational structure of 15 universities, there is a special designated unit in the central division dealing with joint studies. In 14 universities there is a designated position for handling joint studies at the level of basic units (faculties or institutes), in 10 – at the central level – at the rector’s or chancellor’s level. In nine universities special units have been established outside the central division in the basic units. In 14 cases these solutions co-occur with each other. A dedicated position at the central level is more common in smaller universities, while a dedicated unit in the rector’s or chancellor’s division and positions in faculties or other basic units are more typical of larger universities.

The most frequently indicated (26 universities) source of financing for joint studies was the unit’s own budget, the second most frequently indicated source was external funding (20 indications) and the third was funding from partner university (19). However, eight units indicated other sources – answers to open questions indicate that these were basically funds from the Erasmus+ programme. It is worth adding that most (25 universities) combined different sources of funding.

Half of the surveyed universities carry out evaluations of the joint studies and analyse the opinions of students. This applies primarily to courses funded by the central action of the Erasmus+ programme Erasmus Mundus Joint Master, although some universities indicated that evaluation of the level of teaching is self-evident, as these courses are subject to assessment just like any other courses:

They were covered by the Erasmus survey, but we also had our own tools – surveys and in-depth interviews and monitoring visits. We also had to prepare a summary for our statistical purposes. [IDI2]

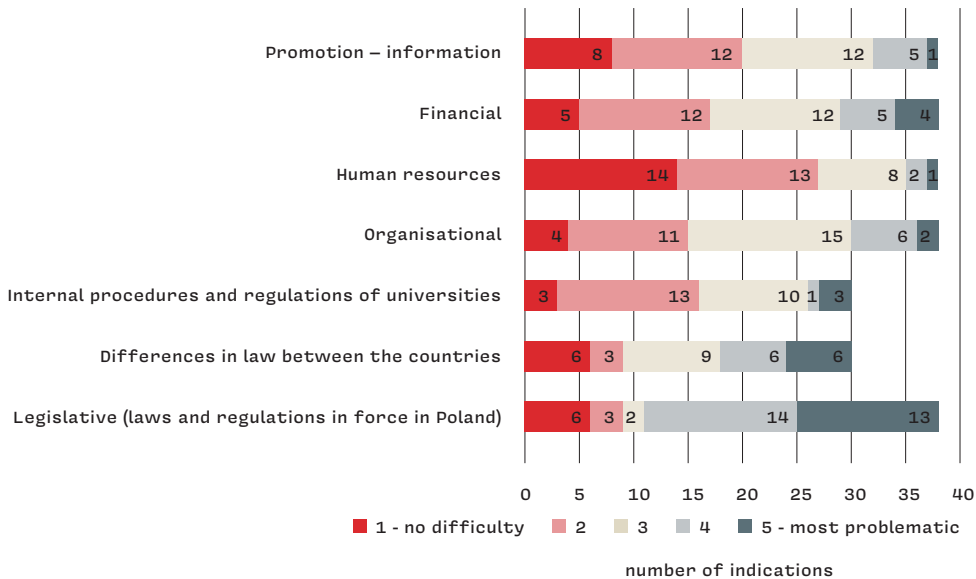


DIAGRAM 19. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "What aspects of conducting joint studies were/are the most difficult for your university?"

Source: own study based on the CAWI survey, universities experienced in conducting joint studies, n=43

One university, which also implements joint studies with partners from the economic area (companies), indicated that they carry out programme evaluation:

Industry partners evaluate and indicate what to change in the programme, e.g. now there are more problem issues, apart from theoretical ones. [IDI7]

Promotional activities focused solely on joint studies seem to be limited. Of the universities that took part in the survey, 14 have separate websites and one has a social media profile dedicated to joint studies.

EVALUATION OF JOINT STUDIES

The qualitative research shows that the field of study, its level and the location of the university with which the joint studies are carried out influence the differences in the candidate profile. A common feature is that these studies are treated as elite, prestigious, exclusive and demanding, which translates into a small number of participants ranging from one to a dozen per year.

According to the respondents, such persons must be mobile and involved in the studies:

Among Polish students these are bold students, open to change. Studies are a passion for them, nothing keeps them in Poland too much. [IDI5]

An important motivation is also related to the improvement of employability, which a double degree provides:

Highly motivated individuals who know from the start that a double degree means double work. They can also find better work both in Poland and abroad. [IDI3]

Another factor is transport and housing issues. All the respondents pointed out that joint study students have to provide their own accommodation and travel, which discourages some people and leads others to consider such studies as an investment that has to pay off:

They must have the capital to arrange the travel. We help organise, but not financially – we do not fund travel or accommodation. [ID14]

It is true that some of the universities surveyed help with this issue through the Erasmus+ programme, but they realise that this is a formal problem:

Erasmus mobility has helped us to provide for our students. Our students cannot travel without financial support, because they simply cannot afford it. [ID13]

Some of the respondents recommend that sources of funding should be established already at the stage of signing agreements between universities.

Both third-level studies and rare courses offered in culturally different countries, such as zoology in China, attract fewer participants than popular courses delivered in similar countries, such as accounting in Poland and France. However, it should be stressed that normally the annual enrolment is up to a few people.

In the case of Erasmus Mundus or the NAWA - Katamaran programme, high scholarships attract very good students selected centrally by the consortium.

CHALLENGES

All universities with experience of running joint studies were asked to identify difficulties and good practice in running such an education. With regard to the difficulties, legislative issues come to the fore. More than seven out of 10 universities (27 out of 38 answers given) identified them as problematic. Differences in law between partner countries were perceived as a problem by representatives of four out of 10 universities (and as not posing difficulties by three out of 10). For the remaining dimensions, the predominant answers were indications that there were no difficulties: organisational and financial issues (four out of 10 indicated that there were no difficulties,

half as many that there were), internal procedures at universities and supervision (half of the indications that there were no difficulties, with more than three times fewer indications of problems).

In the open question, few respondents commented on problematic issues, mainly (representatives of three universities) referring to reconciling organisational and legal differences between different educational systems:

The differences in educational systems and the associated formal and legal difficulties (length of studies, conversion of grades, start dates) affect the organisation of the education process. Difficulties also arise from the understanding of joint studies and interpretations and their methodologies. [CAWI]

Different education and study organisation system. [CAWI]

The differences translate into such mundane matters as reconciling examination session dates:

Coordination of exam dates (different timetables). [CAWI]

Further difficulties are linked to the specificities of partner countries. As the university representative quoted below notes, some locations – in this case Ukraine – do not attract much interest from Polish students. At the same time, the lack of validation of the language of instruction causes problems in the educational process:

We observe a lack of interest from Polish students in participating in the programme of joint studies with partner universities in Ukraine. Another difficulty is linked to the language barrier for students coming from Ukraine. At present, the recruitment process does not require proof of knowledge of the Polish language, which is necessary for the completion of the study programme. Hence, a high level of student disengagement, lack of integration in

the academic environment and problems in completing classes, obtaining credits/passing exams are observed. [CAWI]

A separate issue, and an interesting recommendation, is to take into account the needs of international students at the level of the country's visa and scholarship policy:

It seems necessary to coordinate administrative actions in order to assist internationalisation. This is a question, for example, of the consular system – visas, etc. It should be remembered that quality is the best promotion. It should never be sacrificed to fulfil procedures – it is the procedures that should be changed if they block quality. Any problem with obtaining a visa or failure to comply with obligations towards a student gives rise to his or her negative opinion. Perhaps there should be a national programme to support the quality of English-language programmes, in order to make them an attractive offer (necessarily taking into account our real competitive advantages, identifying market needs and consulting various environments, especially business circles) and to promote them. The scholarship system is one of the elements that can contribute to this. In the first stage scholarships should attract ambitious students who will be ambassadors of promotion in the future. [CAWI]

A single voice concerned changes to the rules on graduation. It may show a lack of knowledge (Article 60(4) of the Act of 20 July 2018 allows for the issuance of a joint degree by Polish and foreign universities) or a problem with the application of this provision (the same article refers to Polish requirements on how to construct such a degree):

According to the respondents, there are still problems with the shape of the law regulating this form of study.

Polish regulations do not allow for the issuance of a single, joint, consortium degree. This is inconsistent with EU regulations and the practice of the higher education sector in the EU. This is one of many problems that prevent the development of a joint degree formula with international partners in our country. The legal environment is very unfavourable for such initiatives. [CAWI]

The qualitative study complements this picture. The respondents unanimously agreed that conducting joint studies involves a number of challenges and problems which cannot be escaped by undertaking this type of activity. They are legislative, legal, organisational and financial in nature.

According to the respondents, there are still problems with the shape of the law regulating this form of study – for some, the regulations are too general, requiring requests for interpretation from the ministry, while for others they are too restrictive, making it impossible to adapt smoothly to the requirements of the partner universities:

Polish regulations do not help – it is difficult to work with a partner from a distant country and system, e.g. the requirement for two humanities subjects in our country and the lack of such a requirement in the partner's – we had to convince them that it was important. On the other hand, we had

to adapt to the pre-review system. There is also the problem of down-loading original documents. It is impossible to create a complete student portfolio. Although the studies are in English, all documentation should be in Polish according to Polish law. [IDI2] The legislation is good because it is flexible, but there are no recommendations on how to create these studies. In 2013, we collected information through friends from other universities, but we also wrote to the Ministry, however the answers are not always clear. [IDI5]

Legislative - lack of clear rules on opening courses and open rules, would allow flexible adjustment; it is also about adjusting to the law of the partner or negotiating with the partner. [IDI6]

In the opinion of the respondents, the rules should be more transparent and easier in application, which would facilitate preparation and implementation, but also eliminate concern about whether the activities are legal:

Laws and regulations - should be easier and the procedure is difficult and unclear and various questions are constantly being asked to which it is difficult to find answers to, e.g. can you [issue - M], BW] a joint degree. Sometimes we write these agreements in the dark, other times we make a wild guess. There should also be model agreements. Now - after the amendment - working out a joint degree is not difficult, but it would be better if it were done centrally, if there was a model. [IDI9]

Lack of regulation on a national scale - everything is verging on the illegal. [IDI7]

The lack of knowledge regarding “templates and models, e.g. the content of agreements from the ministry, for further

work and specific guidance on how to create joint degrees” [IDI4] is also a challenge.

The respondents also point out that a lot depends on university lawyers, who interpret the regulations differently at different universities. Although they believe that Act 2.0 has made the provisions more flexible with regard to these studies, for some it has not solved all the problems:

Accreditation - the Ministry itself did not know what to do. We wanted a certificate that these studies were accredited in Poland, so it was only approved on a general basis and not on a joint degree basis. Now we will probably face the same problem when we change something in the programme. [IDI3]

We have concerns about the Polish legislation - mainly in terms of accreditation of the course - PAKA will not go to the USA to accredit the course there, and the problem of shaping the study regulations so that the provisions concerning double degrees are well prepared. The constitution for science is understated and this remains an open issue. As far as double degrees are concerned, I asked the Ministry and they do not know certain things either. It should be more specific and not close all possibilities when it comes to double degrees. [IDI4]

The problem with Article 60 of Act 2.0, already referred to several times in this publication, is pointed out:

It sounds harmless, but in the opinion of people conducting such studies it causes difficulties, because you have to identify the leader of the consortium, and it channels the subsidy to this leader. [IDI8]

During the interviews, many organisational challenges related to their own university and the partner university were pointed out. In order to launch joint studies, the whole programme must be built

from scratch, and this requires knowledge of both legislative and organisational expectations and differences in both countries. There is a need to find solutions to the discrepancies. This requires negotiations with the partner, but also flexibility in relation to own plans and expectations. This is because, despite their common features, the educational systems in different countries differ. The differences in evaluation systems may also be a challenge, e.g. “Germany has modules and subjects, but there are no partial grades, and in our country every subject has to have a grade” [IDI10], which results in the practical question of how to introduce common grading: “ECTS points do not make this possible – a conversion factor had to be worked out” [IDI5]:

In 2008 we knew very little, there was no information, no clear procedures. It was a challenge for us to create the entire programme documentation in two languages. We had to relax the requirements on both sides regarding the language level of the students entering and leaving the university. The idea was that German students had to demonstrate knowledge of Polish and Polish students had to demonstrate knowledge of German. Because in order to finish our studies, a person has to speak Polish to get a Polish degree and it is the same in Germany. [IDI2]

System differences may also relate, for example, to the launch of fields of study and their subsequent modification: “In Germany it is done at the level of the *Land* authorities, and in our country it is done at the level of the university senate” [IDI10]. In general, the respondents indicated that systemic differences should be taken into account already at the level of designing joint studies.

Organisational challenges for some universities include preparing the entire degree programme in a foreign language, but this is not the model implemented

everywhere – in some joint degree programmes classes are held in two languages.

It is also worth mentioning the challenges related to student citizenship:

Citizenship issues, issuing visas or residence cards – that takes about a year now. After all, it does not have to be a German citizen who comes here, but a Vietnamese studying in Germany, these are citizens of the world. How to legalise their stay – it’s a different challenge than for an EU citizen. [IDI4]

There is also an organisational problem when students withdraw during their studies, therefore, one of the universities introduced “the necessity to sign a declaration that if they withdraw they have to reimburse the costs of the language course and participation in the studies” [IDI4].

In relation to these organisational challenges, the respondents clearly indicate that the implementation of joint studies requires a high level of commitment from both academic and administrative staff. Thus, on the one hand, attention is drawn to the importance of motivating those involved and, on the other, to the need for institutional support through the creation of an appropriate unit dedicated to this activity:

We would not succeed if it weren’t for the enthusiasts. We often met and travelled on our own funds – we had no financial allowance. [IDI2]

Financial problems mentioned in the above quotation are ever-present. It was pointed out that the studies are not profitable, that there are no funds for the maintenance and travel of students, and for the salaries of staff, especially administrative staff:

With the grant master diploma studies, the programme does not finance everything, and student maintenance is a problem here – we help ourselves with other programmes, but you have to be careful about double financing. This is an unnecessary obstacle – why bother? Everything could be shared. [IDI1]



Source: own study based on the CAWI survey, universities conducting joint studies, n=30

NAWA does not allow to employ someone from administration to implement programmes, and this means that they [people from the administration - MJ, BW] had to implement these programmes as part of their duties, and this is extremely difficult and demanding and reduces commitment. [IDI4]

Financial issues are also, according to some, an obstacle in convincing university authorities to conduct such studies. One of the respondents points out that a few years ago, students of this type of studies “paid off” for the university, as they raised the value in the subsidy algorithm – now this mechanism no longer works, which reduces the university’s motivation to run such a demanding programme. As stressed by all the respondents, these studies are not profitable for the university.

The advice that the respondents formulate and the good practices that they indicate are directly related to the diagnosed problems and challenges. It is therefore important to carefully calculate the finances, taking into account that “some things will have to be covered from one’s own resources, e.g. classroom occupancy, teacher travel. Addressing the issue of staff. A super

business plan is needed” [IDI1], as well as an identification of differences in domestic and foreign regulations and anticipation of related challenges:

Understanding the definition of joint studies and comparing it with the partner’s understanding plus checking the partner’s legislation – who is responsible for it, how to combine different study systems, e.g. length of studies. [...] One must first compare the systems – how they work, and also how joint degrees are understood in a given country, because there are different interpretations. Also in Poland there is no clear [clear - MJ, BW] understanding or even translation of this term, e.g. companies translate it differently. [IDI5]

The respondents indicate that it is important to work with partners who are known and reliable, with whom you have already carried out some activities:

One has to think about whether there is a point to such studies – they can both raise and lower your rank if the university is poor. The studies should not be opened at a push, when someone makes an offer to us. [IDI1] Act

DIAGRAM 20. Distribution of the respondents’ answers to the question “Does the implementation of joint study programmes by your university with foreign partners, have, in your opinion, an impact on...”

with partners you know, understand and who are equally committed. Use the experience of others, from other countries, this helps to create documentation. [IDI2]

It is necessary to have credible partners, certainly not to deal with coordination from the first edition, but to start as a partner, learn e.g. how to prepare report applications. It is also important to have an attractive course of study, because it is also an investment for students, which must pay off. [IDI6]

The respondents emphasised that “partners” are not only academics, but also administrative staff – thus it should not be assumed that good experiences of cooperation with foreign scholars will translate into ease of cooperation with the university as such:

Check how the administration of the partner university works, whether they will be involved. Check if the planned course will be attractive for students. You need to work with partners that you know, because this guarantees success. I would not enter the programme with an unknown partner. [IDI4]

Involvement is very important. “This must be done at all costs” [IDI3], but it is equally important to start preparations much earlier. According to the respondents, it is also a good solution to appoint a team at the university, which will include both scientific and administrative staff. “Academics themselves are not enough” [IDI5].

BENEFITS

In the quantitative survey, representatives of 30 higher education institutions responded to the question about the advantages of conducting joint studies. The most frequently indicated benefits – eight out of 10 universities – included the exchange of know-how (25 out of 30 indications) and the development of teaching potential thanks to the exchange of staff (24 out of 30). As many as seven out of 10 universities see the

benefits of cooperation in the organisation of scientific conferences (22 out of 30), six out of 10 of joint research projects (19 out of 30) and publications (18 out of 30).

In the qualitative survey, the respondents indicated a number of benefits from conducting joint studies. Firstly, increasing the internationalisation of universities (but also student life):

Nothing is more internationalising than two degrees, it shows that the university has done a lot of work and this attracts students. A double degree is one of the options, but it is the main attraction, in my opinion. Even the dean’s office has to internationalise, e.g. to redo documentation. [IDI3]

Secondly, copying good practices, such as teaching methodologies. Thirdly, promoting the university and raising its prestige. Fourthly, better education of students resulting from contact with more

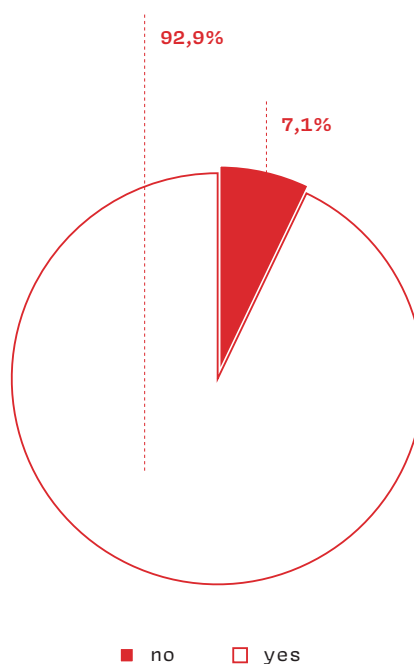


DIAGRAM 21. Distribution of the respondents’ answers to the question “Before receiving this survey, were you aware of the possibility of joint studies?”

Source: own study based on the CAWI survey, universities not offering joint studies, n=84

academic staff; making the educational offer more attractive:

Students have the opportunity to experience different approaches to teaching and learning – in our case foreign languages, seeing socio-cultural differences in language acquisition. [ID10]

Fifthly, the scientific benefits of closer cooperation, which translates into joint applications for grants and scientific publications – “institutionalisation of activities that academics sometimes carry out only through personal contacts, not always formally” [ID18]. Sixthly, students have the possibility of finding a better job, also outside Poland, as well as acquiring intercultural competence:

Competences are useful in different [professions - M], BW], giving [they give - M], BW] a competitive advantage on the market. [ID14]

For students – the possibility of mobility, change of cultural environment, contact with a different culture of study – this gives intercultural competence. This changes the attitude towards studies – teaches new teaching methods and a broader context of study. And offers opportunities to find work easier – work in an intercultural environment. [ID19]

Seventhly, in some cases, the local community can be the beneficiary:

We worked in classes on specific local problems, e.g. revitalisation of the city on behalf of the city government, the city funded prizes. [ID12]

All the respondents pointed out that this type of study does not bring financial benefits to the university – they should be guided by image and content-related issues.

The decision to launch joint studies stems from previous experience of collaboration with a particular university – either within a particular programme or academically, through academic staff:

This is an old story. In the 1980s, one of the main researchers from the university established cooperation with [...], and they have been close for 40 years, which turned into research and teaching cooperation and then joint studies. It is a cooperation with traditions. [ID11] It was a coincidence – we implemented Erasmus with this university. One of the students showed us this way – she got an offer from Germany to finish her studies there, but she also finished our university and obtained her degree. And it came out naturally. Once she had done that, we started thinking about whether to introduce such a programme and we launched it. At that time we heard that it would not work. [ID12] The vice-chancellor had such a dream to cooperate closely with a certain university, it was not a question of making money, but just a desire to deepen cooperation. [ID14]

Joint studies thus evolve from other forms of cooperation, of which they are an extension and deepening, bringing multidimensional benefits to the various beneficiaries: the university, the students and the academic staff. Therefore, the selection of a partner for joint studies is not the result of a search, but the development of existing cooperation. The experience of cooperation so far also brings – according to the respondents – trust and getting to know the partner’s capabilities, both on the scientific and administrative level. The respondents warned against launching joint studies with unknown universities, but also with universities that we know but do not trust. It was also pointed out that the relationship between researchers from different universities who initiate these studies must be “alive”:

The most important thing is not to stop at creating the agreement, but to maintain the relationship, the ongoing contacts [among the partners - M], BW] who initiated the agreement

[...]. We also have some joint studies where we have signed agreements but there are no students – due to a lack of commitment from the organisers who do nothing more than sign an agreement. Students must be sought after – there must be constant engagement: visits, lectures. [IDI19]

WHY AREN'T UNIVERSITIES LAUNCHING JOINT STUDIES?

As we know from the previous sections, universities that have not attempted to launch joint studies are proportionately more often non-public units. The vast majority (93%) knew about this possibility, hence we can guess that the decision was a conscious one.

What was the reason for this decision? Of the 84 units that do not offer joint studies, 17 did not provide any justification. Other answers are dispersed. Most frequently (nine universities) indicated that there was no initiative or need:

We have not received proposals from partners to cooperate in this area and there has also been no internal initiative. [CAWI]

We have no such need. [CAWI] The courses we run do not require joint studies. Our own forces are sufficient. [CAWI]

The university has been focusing on developing pre-graduate education in English in-house for several years. [CAWI]

Nine universities also pointed to procedural issues, especially those related to the arrangement of the study programme:

Difficulties in agreeing detailed procedures with the partner university. [CAWI]

Attempts were made to launch this type of studies (with a university from Ukraine), but procedural problems connected, among others, with difficulties in establishing common

educational outcomes and financing students' stay at a partner university for the purpose of education made it impossible to implement the studies. At that time, there were also no arrangements for remote realisation of subjects, so this type of education was not taken into account. [CAWI]

As a university, we made attempts to launch a joint programme, but too many programme differences stood in the way. [CAWI]

Slightly fewer, 8 universities, indicated that their own resources were too small:

We are too small a unit. In addition, we do not have the staff to provide teaching in just one foreign language. We have specialists in English, German and other languages. For example, English is not dominant. [CAWI] Difficult conditions of functioning in the pandemic regime have put projects to launch new international activities on hold. [CAWI]

At this stage of the implementation of the PoSWiN Act, also taking into account the size and type of university – a public vocational university – there is no potential to launch joint studies. However, in the future, the university takes into account the possibility of launching joint studies. [CAWI]

On the other hand, seven institutions justified not launching joint studies due to the lack of interest from students:

Students' fear of participating in classes in English and the resulting lack of applicants. [CAWI] Lack of interest on the part of students. [CAWI] [...] this is a small non-public university with approximately 90 students. Most of them are professionally active people and, therefore, there are no students willing to take part in student exchange. [CAWI]

On the other hand, six universities justified the fact that they did not conduct joint studies due to the lack of a full offer of classes in a foreign language (the most frequent reference was to the English language):

It is difficult to define the fields of study that we could conduct with a foreign university. We do not conduct any classes in a foreign language for the full cycle of education. We only accept students under Erasmus+ agreements. [CAWI]

This is due to the lack of study in a foreign language on a large enough scale. [CAWI]

We do not have a course taught in English, hence, it is difficult to think about joint studies. [CAWI]

In six cases, the reason was the lack of an appropriate partner:

Due to the lack of international cooperation in this field. [CAWI] We have tried to talk about this, but we have not obtained positive feedback from our potential partners. [CAWI]

We are in search of partner universities. [CAWI]

A final recurring argument are the constraints of current legislation:

Due to formal difficulties and the complexity of the legislation. [CAWI] Very general regulation of joint studies. [CAWI]

One of the many obstacles (we talked about possible cooperation with [...]) turned out to be, for example, the single diploma model then in force in Poland. [CAWI]

Individual indications concerned the lack of adequate knowledge to start working on the launch of joint studies and financial issues.

What support would prompt universities to launch joint studies? As shown above, financial issues were not indicated as the main obstacle, however, in the answers to the open question about expected

support, they were most frequently mentioned, with 21 indications:

Some form of grant would be necessary for the organisation of meetings with the partner(s) and for the development of programmes and the preparation of teaching materials. [CAWI]

Financial support, subsidising translations, subsidising the preparation of some of the online MOOC courses, basically all our needs boil down to subsidising activities. [CAWI]

The fulfilment of the economic criteria for such an undertaking would be an essential condition. It would be helpful to obtain a grant. This formula has enabled other educational undertakings to be launched in the past. Some of them have been permanently included in the offer of studies. [CAWI]

As the quote below shows, substantive support involves financial support – the subsidy could be used to create a position and train a specialist to lead such a programme:

Administrative assistance [is needed - MJ, BW] in the preparation of international documentation necessary for hiring staff. In the case of small universities, this is a particularly difficult problem to solve, requiring support not only in terms of content, but above all financially. [CAWI] Subsidising the position for the head of joint studies, training. [CAWI]

Second in the order of importance (20 institutions) was the reference to substantive support in the interpretation and implementation of regulations and procedures. Such support could take the form of training and/or a guidebook:

Training or webinar for employees on how to run a joint degree programme, what to pay attention to when drafting an agreement, how to account for such a programme. [CAWI] Training

on procedures for creating such an offer, documentation of the course of joint studies with specific examples (e.g. a specimen diploma), practical solutions (ID card, documentation of the course of studies, etc.). [CAWI] Guidebook/checklist with requirements. [CAWI]

A guidebook on how to launch joint studies. [CAWI]

On the other hand, eight institutions referred to legislative changes. The indications concerned simplification or greater clarity and stability of the rules:

Clear regulations and certainty of invariability of legal acts. [CAWI] Concrete regulations related to joint studies concerning their organisation, recognition of grades, documentation of student credits. [CAWI]

Simplification of procedures regarding learning outcomes. [CAWI]

Less complicated procedures. [CAWI]

Seven higher education institutions would expect support in the search of reliable foreign partners:

Support would be necessary in terms of establishing contact with a university that would like to run joint studies with our university and developing the programme so that it meets the requirements of the teaching standards set out in the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 26 July 2019 on educational standards preparing for the profession of doctor, dentist, pharmacist, nurse, midwife, laboratory diagnostician, physiotherapist and paramedic (Journal of Laws 2019, item 1573, as further amended). [CAWI] Establishing cooperation with a partner interested in the formula of joint studies conducted with a non-public higher education institution. Support in attracting international partners. [CAWI]

Finding a potential partner (university) that would accept the legal solutions and financial consequences in force in our higher education system. [CAWI]

Five universities mentioned support in promoting the studies and recruiting students:

Possibility to recruit international students as part of joint studies. [CAWI] Support in terms of [...] student recruitment. [CAWI]

The university is prepared to launch the studies, but the problem is the lack of interest in such a programme. After hearing the first information about how such studies are carried out, students withdraw, not sure whether they could cope, especially in terms of language. [CAWI]

SUMMARY

Although joint studies in Poland are not a novelty, they are not common either. Of the nearly 130 universities whose representatives took part in the survey, joint studies were conducted by a third. The oldest studies of this type, as indicated by the respondents, date back to the 1970s. Although they were not joint studies according to the law at the time, they met all the formal requirements applicable today and are still functioning. In the second decade of the 21st century there has been a significant increase in the number of universities launching their first joint studies.

Despite this long history, there is still ambiguity about the definition of this form of activity organisation. The most common understanding of joint degrees is the development of a programme by universities in different countries and its implementation in partner institutions, resulting in a joint or double degree. However, in practice, respondents qualified as joint studies activities that significantly deviated from such a definition. The respondents noted the frequent

misuse of the term “joint studies”: this was due to the desire to give a particular study programme additional prestige.

In fact, joint studies are an elitist and demanding form of university study, attracting small groups of students who are open to mobility and willing to bear the additional costs of travel and accommodation. They are more often launched at large public institutions, especially technical, agricultural, economic schools and universities.

The number of programmes and graduates varies. Second-cycle studies were the most popular. The majority of graduates were students from Poland. As far as the number of programmes is concerned, the highest number of programmes were carried out at technical universities, followed by universities and economic universities. By discipline, the largest number of programmes were conducted in the field of management and quality sciences, followed by mechanical engineering, automation, electronics, electrical engineering, and environmental engineering, mining and energy. On the other hand, in terms of the number of graduates, economic universities ranked highest, followed by medical universities, technical universities and universities.

The most popular language of teaching is English. Polish and German were also mentioned in relatively large numbers. The partners with which the surveyed universities collaborated in the 2020/2021 academic year were mostly German, French, Italian and Ukrainian universities.

Joint degree qualifications were most often awarded on the basis of a thesis co-supervised by supervisors employed at both partner universities; a joint examination and recognition of the examination conducted at the partner university were also frequently indicated. The respondents did not have any problems in verifying the compliance of joint degree programmes with the Polish Qualifications Framework.

The most common understanding of joint studies is the development of a programme by universities in different countries and its implementation in partner institutions, resulting in a joint or double degree.

In smaller universities, joint studies are more often coordinated by a single staff member in a central division, while in larger universities there are units created in the chancellor’s or vice-chancellor’s divisions and separate positions in basic units. For universities, the double degree as a certificate of completion of joint studies is less burdensome from a formal and procedural point of view. The respondents called for the preparation of a common diploma template at the central level.

The most important source of funding of joint studies at the surveyed universities was their own budget, funds obtained under grants/projects and resources of partner universities. Most higher education institutions combined different ways of financing. The evaluation of the quality of joint studies takes place somewhat “naturally” as part of the evaluation procedures of the teaching process or in connection with the requirements of specific programmes from which the tasks are co-financed (e.g. Erasmus Mundus). However, promotional

activities focused on this form of study can be described as sporadic.

The most frequently cited difficulties in conducting joint studies are linked to current legal regulations and differences between the partner countries. Organisational and financial issues, the organisation of internal procedures and promotion were more often described as unproblematic, although the issue of the unprofitability of the joint degree programme came up repeatedly during the survey. Respondents emphasised the importance of selecting partners from countries attractive to Polish students, the need to verify the language competences of hosted students and postulated that the needs of international students should be taken into account at the level of visa and scholarship policy of the state. A major challenge in view of the differences between the educational and legal systems in different countries is the construction of a uniform curriculum and the significant involvement of scientific and administrative staff. According to the respondents, the current legal regulations are perceived as too general, which makes it necessary for universities to turn to the Ministry of Education and Science for interpretation, on the other hand – with regard to the more detailed provisions of the Act – they make it difficult to adapt to the requirements of universities from other countries. The respondents are calling for the provisions to be simplified and for agreement templates to be introduced.

From the perspective of the university, joint degrees provide a number of benefits: internationalisation, adoption of good practices related to teaching, raising the prestige and promotion of the university, better quality of teaching. They also translate into closer scientific, not only didactic, cooperation with foreign partners (the respondents emphasised that mutual trust, built on a history of cooperation not only in scientific

but also in administrative terms, is important in the selection of partners). As can be seen, joint studies can play a significant role from the point of view of the university's positioning in the academic field, but they certainly do not translate into financial results. The majority of universities also see benefits in cooperation in the organisation of scientific conferences, preparation of joint research projects and publications. Students, on the other hand, gain a more attractive educational offer, the opportunity to look for a job outside their country of origin and an increase in intercultural competences.

What kind of support measures do the surveyed universities that have not launched joint studies expect? First of all, financial support, both for the salaries of academic staff, the preparation of teaching materials and the training and possible employment of administrative staff. The respondents would also count on support in interpreting and implementing regulations and procedures. Such support could take the form of training or a guidebook. There were also voices in favour of simplification and greater transparency of regulations, support in searching for reliable partners and promotion.

Universities that do not offer joint studies indicate various reasons for this, ranging from a lack of demand or initiative among the staff of the institution, organisational difficulties, insufficient own resources to a lack of interest on the part of students and problems in finding a suitable partner

Terminology, legal and organisational aspects, recognition, support

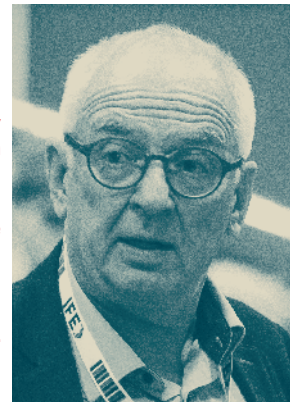
In this chapter we present articles prepared by practitioners from Polish universities – these are texts concerning the relation between the idea of joint studies and the Bologna process, legal and organisational aspects as well as recognition. This section also contains an article on the Katamaran programme implemented by NAWA.

How to speak a common language

– terminological challenges related to joint studies and the issue of degrees by two or more universities

TOMASZ SARYUSZ-WOLSKI, PHD, ENG.
Lodz University of Technology

Creator and director of the International Training Centre of the Lodz University of Technology, which has been conducting training in English and French since the beginning of the 1990s. Coordinator of many projects in the field of internationalisation and quality of education, Bologna expert and, before that, Bologna promoter. In 2007-2010, he was the Polish representative in the Bologna Follow-up Group. He was a precursor in the implementation of innovative methods of education, Problem Based Learning and ECTS and ECVET systems. He participated in the work on creating the Polish Qualifications Framework and the Integrated Qualifications System.



The term “joint studies” as a definition of an educational programme designed and delivered jointly by two or more universities first appeared in documents related to European higher education in 1976⁵³. This form of education certainly existed before, but the date indicated in literature is considered an official beginning. With the launch of the first edition of the Erasmus Mundus programme, which aimed to make the studies offered by European universities more attractive and improve their quality, studies have gained in importance. Joint studies would even become a kind of “trademark” of European higher education, with which Europe and the countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) would be associated.

⁵³ Official Journal of the European Communities No. C 38 of 19 February 1976, which uses the phrase *joint programmes of study and research between institutions in several Member States*.

Although the history of joint studies in Europe is 45 years old, there is no single, correct and binding definition or characteristic. Both in global and Polish publications or Internet resources one can find various ways of naming and defining this form of education. Although they describe similar phenomena, due to academic traditions in individual countries or regions or a particular understanding of the term, they are more frequently used in certain countries. In English, you can often meet the following terms: *double, multiple, joint degree; double, multiple, joint diploma*.

In fact, in order to organise and understand what today, in the second decade of the 21st century, is hidden under the concepts of double (triple) degrees, joint studies, one cannot ignore the fact of the existence of the European Qualifications Framework, the Polish Qualifications Framework and the Integrated Qualifications System in Poland. The European Qualifications Framework has been in place in the European Union since 2008, and the Polish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education was first introduced by the *Law on Higher Education of 2011* as the National Qualifications Framework, then incorporated into the Integrated Qualifications System introduced by the Act of late 2015. It is difficult to ignore these facts after so many years.

The university, by issuing a degree, confers a qualification. According to the definition of a qualification⁵⁴: “a degree is a confirmation of the learning outcomes included in its standard, i.e. in the case of higher education in the description of the study programme. It is therefore not an acknowledgement of the completion of a learning process, but an acknowledgement of learning outcomes, even if they have been acquired outside the university”. Thus, if a student has achieved the learning outcomes that are consistent with the requirements for a programme/field of study partly in another institution, and this has been reliably

verified, he/she can obtain the corresponding qualification confirmed by a degree. Also a higher education institution in which a student has followed only part of his/her studies and has achieved part of the learning outcomes, can validate the learning outcomes achieved outside and, on the basis of a positive result of verifying the compliance of all the acquired outcomes with the requirements for their qualification, award their degree. Thus, a student may obtain two or even more qualifications/degrees while studying for the number of years provided for one degree programme. This is the most common way of issuing usually two degrees to international exchange students e.g. under the Erasmus programme. Very often, in order to meet the requirements of both universities, a student has to extend his/her studies, usually by one semester, and prepare two dissertations. This happens when universities are not able to reconcile the formal and regulatory requirements or to harmonise them for a given study programme or a given qualification. This solution is somewhat complex in organisational terms, but it still has many benefits, above all for the student who, as a result of this path, can acquire two qualifications/two degrees, usually from different countries.

A situation definitely less complicated for the student is when two or more universities discuss and work out a study path carried out partly in one institution, partly in another and sometimes partly in a third university, so that the student, while pursuing a pre-planned study path at different

⁵⁴ “Qualification - a set of learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and social competences, acquired in formal education, non-formal education or through informal learning, in accordance with the requirements set for a given qualification, the achievement of which has been verified in validation and formally confirmed by an authorised certifying body” - Act on IQS.

universities, fulfils all the requirements for the awarding of a qualification/degree by these universities. Very often, a partially joint education pathway planned in this way leads to one diploma thesis and one diploma examination carried out jointly or recognised by one of the parties to the agreement. Unfortunately, even in this case it is sometimes necessary to extend the studies by one semester. There are situations

where the planned study path includes first-and second-cycle studies or long-cycle studies (Master's degree). In addition to the advantages for students, the solution based on a jointly agreed study path brings enormous benefits for the university. Discussions among staff about the differences and similarities of the different study programmes usually lead to their improvement. As in the previous case, the student

TABLE 4. Possible variants of awarding a joint or multiple degree

Variant	Name	Nature of cooperation	Documents issued	Benefits for the student	Benefits for the university
1.	Double, multiple degree	International exchange of students without close programme cooperation of the universities based on an agreement – consent related to the recognition of learning outcomes obtained at the partner university.	Two or more degrees attesting to two or more qualifications which are different from each other	A broader range of achieved competences attested by two or more universities than in the case of a single qualification	Very limited
2	Double or multiple degree	Joint development of study paths allowing for the award of several different qualifications that meet national requirements. Exchange of teaching staff to teach individual classes. Mutual recognition of learning outcomes achieved at a partner university	Two or more degrees attesting the awarding of two or more qualifications differing from each other, registered in different countries	A broader range of achieved competences attested by two or more universities than in the case of a single qualification	Significant benefits of collaboration in the preparation of study paths. Benefits of cooperation in international academic staff exchanges
3	Joint degree	A qualification jointly developed by two or more universities together with the programme of study leading to it. Student and teaching staff exchanges. Joint process for validation of learning outcomes. Part of the student's studies take place at a partner university	Two or more degrees attesting the award of two or more qualifications of the same scope of competence but registered in different countries (registers). Or, if possible, the issuance of a joint document attesting the award of a national qualification.	A unique qualification most often with the use of specific educational opportunities of partner universities	The huge benefits of a jointly developed programme of studies and joint teaching. Exchange of experience in education and verification of learning outcomes/competences

Source: own study

receives several qualifications with different learning outcomes.

It is different when two or more universities develop a joint, same qualification, defining all the learning outcomes a student must achieve to obtain it. The study programmes in terms of lists of subjects and study plan may be slightly different, but the final learning outcomes for the whole programme are the same. Usually the way in which learning outcomes are defined also differs, but when you delve into their meaning, rather than their formal notation, you will find that they are the same learning outcomes. The qualification/programme in this situation is usually based on the experience and teaching capacity of all partners and has great benefits for both students and partner universities. If, in addition, joint implementation of other activities is foreseen, such as exchange of academic staff, students and use of specific, unique resources of individual universities, this is the highest level of cooperation and can be called a “joint degree”.

To date, it is not possible to assign qualifications to the European Qualifications Framework or to register qualifications at an international level. By definition, a qualification is assigned to the National Qualifications Framework and included in the National Qualifications Register. In the case of cooperation between universities from different countries, even if they all belong to the EU, the joint degree, created as described above, is not one qualification, but two, three or more identical qualifications entered in different registers. According to the author, this does not prevent it from being called a “joint degree”. The legislation of some countries allows the award of a qualification (degree) to be marked as having been awarded jointly or simultaneously by other universities.

The possible cases of awarding multiple or joint degrees described above are summarised in Table 4.

In both Polish and English, there are many names for the qualifications, degrees awarded to graduates or study programmes and study paths mentioned above. In the author’s opinion there is a need to sort out this nomenclature if only for our domestic needs.

Joint studies in the Bologna process

JOLANTA URBANIKOWA
University of Warsaw

Joint studies (joint programmes) means a jointly designed programme, coordinated and implemented jointly by different higher education institutions from countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), leading to a double/multiple or joint degree (qualification, diploma)⁵⁵.

Joint studies are a hallmark of the EHEA. It is widely accepted, both in European documents and in the discourse of the higher education community, that they aim to enhance student and teacher mobility, provide opportunities for learning and teaching cooperation using the resources of the participating universities and create, or should create, a truly European learning experience.

However, it should be remembered that achieving these objectives is only a tool for achieving the overarching strategic objective of improving higher education, not only quantitatively (enriching the teaching offer, intensifying international mobility), but above all qualitatively (fulfilment of the fitness-for-purpose postulate, increasing graduates' chances on the global labour market, readiness to meet social demands, etc.).

Since 1974, Jolanta Urbanikowa has been an academic teacher at the University of Warsaw, senior lecturer of English, plenipotentiary of the Rector of the University of Warsaw for the implementation of the Bologna Process and organisation of language teaching; member of the University Education Council; member of the Bologna team of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools of Poland (KRASP); university coordinator of ECTS; coordinator of the University Language Education System; former member of the Senate of the University of Warsaw and Senate Commission for students, doctoral students and quality of education; Vice President of the European Language Council; Bologna expert until 2013; expert of the European Commission and EACEA, FRSE and NAWA. Involved in many European projects on the quality of language education and training under the Socrates, Lifelong Learning and Erasmus+ programmes, and UNICA (Universities in Capital Cities of Europe). Member of the Selection Committee of the European Language Label and the Programme Council of the magazine "Języki Obce w Szkole" [Foreign Languages at School]. Since 2006, involved in teams (MNiSW, MEN and IBE) working on the Polish Qualifications Framework; author of a publication on language policy in higher education, quality assurance, the Bologna process, qualification framework. Academic and professional interests: the Bologna Process, qualifications framework, recognition, quality of education, language policy and language education, European Education Programmes.



Joint studies created in various formulae have been present in global and European higher education for decades, but literature on the evolution of higher education most often cites 1976, when the term *joint study programmes* was first used⁵⁶ for this designator in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

Since the late 1980s, European universities have been engaged in developing joint study programmes, often leading to a joint degree. The launch of the Bologna Process in 1999 gave new impetus to this phenomenon both in European and non-European universities, including through appropriate national legislative solutions aimed at giving it a more formalised and structured dimension. The launch of the Erasmus Mundus programme in 2004 was instrumental in changing the approach to the development and administration of joint study programmes. Attention is focused on the importance of the notion of “consortium” and “integration” for the proper design, implementation and management of an educational programme. Whether the study programme leads to a joint, double or multiple degree, it is the consortium that should jointly implement the designed concept, ensuring that the curriculum and the organisation of the studies are properly integrated. The programme should reflect the agreed profile and the associated learning outcomes and workload identified for individual subjects and the programme as a whole. Proper organisation of studies should be manifested in the application of common procedures for recruitment, application, selection and admission, as well as rules for the determination of tuition and other fees. Adopting such a philosophy means that students, regardless of their country of origin or home institution, are likely to master the same learning outcomes, be treated equally and fairly⁵⁷.

he experience of Erasmus Mundus has undoubtedly contributed to the formulation of relevant policies within the EHEA, as reflected in the communications of the ministers responsible for Higher Education implementing the Bologna Process⁵⁸. At the same time, it should be remembered that the political context for the Erasmus Mundus programme is the Bologna Declaration adopted in 1999, which states that the primary objective of the process is to ensure transparency in relations between higher education institutions by creating the EHEA and providing tools for the recognition of higher education qualifications, facilitating mobility and fostering academic cooperation.

In the 2012 Bucharest Communiqué⁵⁹, ministers identified the competence of EQAR (The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) and the national accreditation bodies registered in that register to ensure the quality of joint study programmes. They also encouraged universities to further develop joint study programmes reflecting the broader approach characteristic of the EHEA. The relevant bodies set up by ministers are to assess the rules and practices relating to joint programmes in order to eliminate obstacles to cooperation and mobility of students and staff.

⁵⁵ EQAR definition.

⁵⁶ B. Skibińska, A. Bielecka, *Erasmus Mundus - Poradnik administratora studiów wspólnych*, FRSE, Warsaw 2012.

⁵⁷ *Implementing joint degrees in the Erasmus Mundus action of Erasmus+ programme*, EACEA, 2020.

⁵⁸ *Joint international Master programmes: lessons learnt from Erasmus Mundus, the first generation*, EACEA, 2013.

⁵⁹ *Making the Most of Our Potential: Consolidating the European Higher Education Area. Bucharest Communiqué*, 2012, http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations7Bucharest_Communique_2012_610673.pdf, accessed: 3.03.2021.

The key concept determining the quality of joint programmes and, consequently, the recognition of learning outcomes and post-graduate qualifications is “commonality”. This concept describes not only the process of joint programme design and implementation in all dimensions (content, organisation, administration), including the provision of mobility to add value to studying, but also the taking of joint responsibility for its quality and impact, seen in terms of knowledge transfer between higher education institutions, the harmonisation of graduation and qualification processes, and the integration of students into the local community.

Reflection on a new joint degree programme should begin, preferably among familiar partners representing universities with previous joint experience in teaching, research or participation in joint development projects, with an analysis of the status and needs of the participating institutions. The analysis should answer the questions which shortcomings in the educational offer make it impossible to attract new students, what scientific achievements are not properly reflected in the offer, or what social needs and challenges universities have not responded to yet.

The analysis should also address students’ expectations and their readiness to study a new course. It should also be examined whether the relevant national regulations allow for joint degree programmes at all or to what extent. It is very often the case that regulations on the establishment of new courses of study or their accreditation effectively discourage their creation.

The European approach to quality assurance for joint degrees developed by EQAR⁶⁰ should provide a common denominator of criteria, conditions and principles

necessary for effective programme design. Among the pillars of quality assurance for joint degrees, one should not forget about such tools supporting the process of creation, implementation and evaluation of new programmes as the European Qualifications Framework and its national equivalents (e.g. the Polish Qualifications Framework), European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in EHEA, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), supplement to the diploma. This European approach is characterised by reference to standards constructed using agreed EHEA tools without the need to use additional criteria or specific national tools. This approach is also an expression of “commonality”. The European approach to quality assurance applies only to programmes run jointly by higher education institutions from two or more countries; it does not apply to studies conducted jointly by different higher education institutions from the same country.

A harmonised European approach to ensuring the quality of joint studies provides that institutions offering a joint study programme should be recognised as higher education institutions by relevant national authorities. National legal regulations should entitle them to participate in joint programmes and, if applicable, to award joint degrees (qualifications). Qualifying institutions should demonstrate that the degree is a qualification awarded under the national higher education system. It should be remembered that the cooperating institutions not only design, but also operate and implement the programme together. The terms and conditions of the joint programme should be laid down in a cooperation agreement which must include the following elements:

- name of qualification (professional title);
- principles of coordination and accountability of the partners with regard to management and finance (financial resources, allocation of costs and revenues, fees, etc.);
- procedures for the selection and recruitment of candidates;
- the terms and conditions for student and staff mobility;
- examination rules, student assessment methods, recognition of credits (including conversion of grades) and graduation procedures applicable in the consortium.

At this point it should be noted that according to the *ECTS User Guide*⁶¹, grade conversion should not be done on the basis of the ECTS scale but on the basis of a comparison of the grade distribution of the partner universities. There is also an automatic grade conversion tool called EGRACONS⁶², which has been endorsed by both the European Commission and EHEA agencies.

The level of the designed learning outcomes according to clause 1.2 of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA* should be compatible with the indicated level of the Qualifications Framework for the EHEA and the corresponding National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The expected learning outcomes should include knowledge, skills and social competences appropriate to the discipline(s) indicated. According to Standard 1.2 of the *Standards and Guidelines*, the programme should demonstrate that the assumed learning outcomes are achievable and that students will demonstrate appropriate outcomes on completion of their studies. In the case of a study programme leading to a professional title giving access to a regulated profession, it must be ensured that the conditions set out in EU Directive 2005/36/EC are met. The structure and content of the training programme should ensure that the expected learning outcomes can be mastered. The

ECTS system should be used appropriately and it should be demonstrated that credit points have been duly allocated according to the rules described in the ECTS User Guide. A joint first-cycle programme is generally 180-240 ECTS and a joint second-cycle programme is 90-120 ECTS. And in no case less than 60 ECTS, according to the credit ranges defined in the Qualifications Frameworks in the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). There is no compulsory allocation of credit point limits for joint doctoral study programmes. The workload must be monitored as well as the average time needed to complete the studies. Recruitment requirements and selection procedures should be tailored to the level of the programme and discipline.

The recognition of qualifications and periods of study (including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)) should be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and other related regulations.

60 *European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes*, 10.2014, <https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/European-Approach-QA-of-Joint-Programmes-Yerevan-2015.pdf>, accessed: 3.03.2021.

61 *ECTS User Guide*, EC, 2015.

62 European grade conversion system, <http://egracons.eu/>, accessed: 3.03.2021.

In order to avoid doubts concerning the rights and obligations of students participating in a mobility embedded in a joint study programme, it is good practice for the three parties involved, i.e. the host university, the home university and the student concerned, to sign a contract similar to the Learning Agreement used in Erasmus mobility, which defines not only the subjects to be completed by the student, but also the assigned/required ECTS credits and above all the expected learning outcomes. This will make it easier for the student to account for the requirements and enable recognition of his/her achievements.

The programme should be designed to reflect the intended learning outcomes and the teaching methods to achieve them. The needs of students should be respected and catered to, taking into account their different socio-cultural backgrounds. The rules for examining and assessing student performance should correspond with the expected learning outcomes and be applied consistently by all members of the consortium. Principles and measures to support students must contribute to achieving the desired learning outcomes. The specific needs of mobile students should be taken into account and appropriate staff (qualifications, professional experience and international experience) should be provided for the conduct of the study programme. Equipment and infrastructure must be sufficient and appropriate to ensure that the intended learning outcomes can be achieved.

Relevant study programme information, such as recruitment criteria and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures, should be duly documented and published, taking into account the specific needs of mobile students. Cooperating institutions should apply the common quality assurance principles set out in the *European Standards and Guidelines*.

The agreement should also include provisions on the language of instruction to be used during the studies in the joint programme. Consortium members in the recruitment process must verify the required language proficiency of the students. This should be at least the B2 level according to the descriptors for language proficiency levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages⁶³. The agreement should also specify how language support will be provided to students in both the language of instruction and the second language, which is necessary for effective integration into the local community. With regard to university teachers, it is also desirable to define the requirements in terms of language proficiency as well as competence in relation to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology. This should be based on the language policy of the co-operating education institutions setting up the joint degree programme.

As has already been said, mobility is a *sine qua non* element of a joint study programme and its conditions, dates and outcomes should therefore be defined in detail, taking into account in particular the differences in the academic calendar between countries or universities.

If national regulations allow for the issue of a joint degree, this should be decided upon after a thorough reflection on the quality of the programme offered.

⁶³ *Europejski System Opisu Kształcenia Językowego* (translation of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment* with the approval of the Council of Europe), Central Teacher Training Centre, 2003, https://www.ore.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/attachments/ESOKJ_Europejski-System-Opisu.pdf, accessed: 3.03.2021.

Joint studies

- difficult, but possible.

A few words about the challenges related to organising and conducting joint studies in cooperation with a foreign university from the perspective of experience of a Polish university.

ALEKSANDRA MATUKIN-SZUMLIŃSKA
The AGH University of Science
and Technology in Cracow

Director of the Centre for the Organization of Education of the AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow. Graduate of the Faculty of Law and Administration of the Jagiellonian University, where she completed her doctoral studies. She has been professionally involved in higher education for nearly 15 years as a central administration employee and an academic teacher. She gained her experience initially at the Jagiellonian University as an employee of the Teaching Department, as well as a member of scholarship committees for students and doctoral students and a member of the disciplinary committee for doctoral students. She then headed the Teaching Department at the AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow for over 10 years. Since October 2019, she has been the Director of the AGH Centre for the Organisation of Education, where she is responsible for supervising and coordinating matters related to the process of higher education, postgraduate studies and other forms of education. In her everyday practice, she also evaluates agreements on joint education, including with the participation of foreign universities.



JOINT STUDIES UNDER THE NEW LAW - NEW QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

The new *Law on Higher Education and Science*⁶⁴, which came into force on 1 October 2018, introduced a new formula of providing education in the form of joint studies into the Polish higher education system. Unfortunately, bearing in mind the previous regulations concerning the possibility of conducting joint education with a foreign entity, in particular in cooperation with a foreign university, the new Act, in my opinion, does not sufficiently clarify

⁶⁴ Act of 20 July 2018 *Law on Higher Education and Science* (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 478, as further amended), hereinafter referred to as the PSWiN Act, Act 2.0 or the Constitution for Science.

the terminology and definitions used. It also leaves many doubts about the formal and legal conditions to be met in order to conduct joint studies. In university practice, the concept of the so-called double or joint degree has often appeared and continues to appear, but the so-called Constitution for Science, apart from mentioning the possibility of obtaining a joint degree by a graduate of joint studies, does not provide any special regulations in this regard.

In connection with the implementation of new legal regulations, many doubts have arisen, mainly of a legislative nature. I am convinced that many universities in Poland would like to receive answers to some of the key questions below:

1. Does the provision of joint studies require the creation of an entirely new field of study which, by definition, can only be provided as a joint study programme?

2. Is it possible to run joint studies under Article 217 of the Introductory Act⁶⁵ within the existing fields of study, and if so, under what conditions? Specifically, this refers to fields of study where standard study programmes were implemented and programmes also implemented jointly in cooperation with a foreign university on the basis of Article 168 of the previous *Law on Higher Education* of 27 July 2005.

3. Can a Polish university carry out joint education and degrees with a foreign partner university in the fields of study it currently offers, not as joint studies, but on the basis of cooperation agreements on joint education and degrees (the so-called double degree or joint education agreements)? If so, under what conditions?

4. In the light of Article 60(3) of the new Act, what requirements should a joint study programme meet, in particular in the context of the requirements for graduation and obtaining a degree referred to in Article 76 of the Act? For example, what are the possible solutions if the legislation in the partner university's country does not provide for an obligation to submit a diploma thesis and/or take a diploma exam? How should the date of graduation be determined? Can subjects in the humanities or social sciences be dropped? How should a programme of study with a general or practical profile be defined when the legal regulations in the partner country do not stipulate such requirements? How can a student be guaranteed the possibility to choose courses amounting to at least 30% of the total number of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits required for graduation if there is no such possibility or no ECTS credits at the partner institution?

5. Can a joint degree be awarded only to a graduate of joint studies, or also to a graduate who has completed a programme of study on the basis of a joint educational agreement (the so-called double degree agreement), which assumes the implementation of study programmes at two institutions (Polish and foreign) and the awarding of degrees at both institutions?

6. Can a Polish student enrolled in a course of study at an existing higher education institution simultaneously study at a partner institution on the basis of the so-called double degree agreement, in the same way as a foreign student? It is about joint education and degrees within the existing fields of study, which can lead to obtaining two degrees at the same time - from a Polish and a foreign partner university.

7. In light of the current regulations, in an attempt to enrich the educational offer of an existing field of study, is it possible to run several “variants” of study programmes? For example, a single “standard” programme of study leading to the award of a degree from a Polish university only to students who undertake their studies without the participation of a foreign university, and a “joint” programme of study implemented in cooperation with a foreign university, leading at the same time to the award of two degrees: a degree from a Polish university and a degree from a partner university (the so-called double degree)?

LEGISLATIVE / LEGAL CHALLENGES

Trying to tackle the above questions and problems, it should be noted at the outset that the previously binding *Act on Higher Education* of 2005⁶⁶ did not use the concept of joint studies – such a definition did not appear at all in the glossary of terms contained in Article 2. The only regulation under which joint education was allowed was contained in Article 168 of the Law on Higher Education. Pursuant to that provision, degree programmes could be **conducted jointly**⁶⁷ with foreign higher education institutions on the basis of an agreement concluded between them to provide degree programmes in a field and at a level of study where **basic organisational units of Polish higher education institutions** which are parties to the agreement, are authorised to provide degree programmes at a level of study no lower than the level of study defined in the agreement. In addition, graduates of such studies could obtain a joint degree which had to comply with the requirements laid down in the legislation issued pursuant to Article 167 (3) of the PSWiN Act⁶⁸.

The above regulations implied, therefore, that the condition for conducting joint education with a foreign university was that **the Polish university was authorised to offer a field of study at a given level**. Thus, joint education in cooperation with a foreign university took place within the framework of an existing, rather than a newly created, field of study. It is worth noting that the possibility of conducting joint education was not of a mass character, but of an individual and single character – partner universities usually offered the possibility of travel under exchange programmes or under the so-called double degree programme, based on the current educational offer at both universities.

⁶⁵ See the Act of 3 July 2018 – Regulations introducing the *Law on higher education and science* (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 1669, as further amended), hereinafter referred to as the Act introducing the PSWiN.

⁶⁶ Act of 20 July 2005 *Law on Higher Education* (Journal of Laws of 2005, No. 164, item 1365, as further amended), hereinafter referred to as the PSW Act.

⁶⁷ Unless otherwise indicated, all the distinctions in the text come from the author.

⁶⁸ On the basis of art. 167 sec. 3 of the PSWiN Act, the Minister of Science and Higher Education issued regulations that at first (until the end of September 2011) defined the templates of diplomas of completion of studies, including those jointly conferred by various universities and academic institutions, while from 1 September 2011 formally gave up on defining the templates of diplomas by means of executive regulations, and the ministerial regulations only indicated the necessary elements of a diploma, also in the case of joint studies (cf. *Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 19 December 2008 on the types of professional titles conferred on graduates of studies and templates of diplomas and certificates issued by universities*, Journal of Laws of 2009, No. 11, item 61, as further amended; *Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 1 September 2011 on professional titles conferred on graduates of studies, the conditions for issuing and necessary elements of diplomas of study completion and certificates of completion of postgraduate studies and the specimen of a supplement to the diploma*, Journal of Laws of 2011, No. 196, item 1167; *Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 10 February 2017 on professional titles conferred on graduates of studies, the conditions for issuing and necessary elements of diplomas of study completion and certificates of completion of postgraduate studies and the specimen of a supplement to the diploma*, Journal of Laws of 2017, item 279).

Under the new 2018 Act (Article 60), a higher education institution may provide joint studies with a foreign higher education institution **if it has established a degree programme pursuant to Article 53(7) of the Act or has obtained permission to establish a degree programme in the field of study to be provided jointly**. This means that in order for a Polish university to provide joint studies, it must first establish such programmes in accordance with the provisions of the Act. It can do this on its own if it represents a high scientific level (until the end of December 2022 it is necessary to have the right to award the degree of doctor habilitated, while from 1 January 2023 it will be necessary for the university to have the scientific category A+, A or B+ in the discipline to which the newly created joint study programme is assigned). In other cases, the university must apply for a permit from the minister responsible for science and higher education, however, if it wishes to provide education on a degree programme with an all-academic profile, another requirement must be met, namely by the end of December 2022 the university must be authorised to award a doctoral degree, while from 1 January 2023 it will be necessary for the university to have a scientific category B in the discipline to which the newly created joint study programme is assigned. Not having any degree awarding powers or, from 1 January 2023, having a category C or no category at all will mean that a university can only establish joint study programmes with a practical profile⁶⁹. This in turn will entail the obligation to include in the study programme the statutory minimum number of apprenticeships⁷⁰, practical skills training of more than half the number of ECTS credits required to complete the programme in an appropriate manner and under appropriate conditions⁷¹ and the provision of adequate staff⁷².

It follows, therefore, that a university that is not academically strong and does not have the relevant degree awarding powers will in practice be severely restricted in the possibility to conduct joint studies. Therefore, do such regulations allow for greater internationalisation of higher education? I have my doubts.

At this point, it is worth noting that Polish regulations in the case of establishing and conducting higher education studies specify, among other things, the requirements for the study programmes, the teaching of the courses and the conditions for completing the studies.

Article 67 of the PSWiN Act stipulates that degree programmes are provided in a specific field, level and profile on the basis of a study programme that specifies:

- 1) the learning outcomes referred to in the *Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System*, taking into account the universal first level characteristics defined in that Act and second level characteristics defined in the regulations issued on the basis of Article 7(3) of that Act⁷³;
- 2) description of the process leading to the achievement of learning outcomes;
- 3) the number of ECTS credits allocated to the course.

⁶⁹ Cf. Article 206 of the Introductory Act to the PSWiN and Article 53(3), (4) and (7) of the PSWiN Act.

⁷⁰ Cf. Art. 67(5) of the PSWiN Act.

⁷¹ See. § 3(5) and § 6 of the *Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 27 September 2018 on studies* (i.e. Journal of Laws of 2021, item 661), hereinafter referred to as the Regulation of the MNiSW on studies.

⁷² Cf. Art. 73(2) of the PSWiN Act.

⁷³ See *Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 14 November 2018 on second level characteristics of learning outcomes for qualifications at levels 6-8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework* (Journal of Laws 2018, item 2218).

⁷⁴ Pursuant to Article 76 (2) of the PSWiN Act, the diploma thesis is an independent study of a scientific, artistic or practical problem or a technical or artistic achievement presenting the student's general knowledge and skills related to studies in a given field, level and profile as well as the ability to analyse and draw conclusions independently.

The detailed requirements for the study programme are specified in § 3 - § 7 of the Regulation of MNiSW on studies. Above all, it is worth drawing attention to those requirements which are often not known to our foreign partners and which give rise to a number of doubts:

- indicating the study profile and defining, depending on the profile, more than 50% of the number of ECTS credits required to complete the degree programme or courses related to the scientific activity conducted at the institution in the discipline or disciplines to which the field of study is assigned, including the participation of students in courses preparing for or participating in scientific activity (in the case of the general academic profile), or courses developing practical skills (in the case of the practical profile);
- in the case of a field of study assigned to more than one discipline – indication of the main discipline and determination for each of these disciplines the percentage share of the number of ECTS points in the number of ECTS points required to complete the studies;
- a choice of courses to which no fewer than 30% of the number of ECTS credits required for graduation have been allocated;
- the obligation to include foreign language proficiency outcomes in the study programme, especially when the entire degree programme is to be taught in a foreign language;
- compulsory physical education classes in full-time, first-cycle programmes;
- determining the total number of ECTS credits to be obtained by the student for activities involving direct participation of academic staff or other instructors;
- the number of ECTS credits to be obtained by the student for courses in the humanities or social sciences, not less than 5 ECTS credits – in the case of fields

of study corresponding to disciplines other than, respectively, the humanities or social sciences;

- the obligation to take into account the full-range of learning outcomes for studies leading to the award of the degree of engineer or master engineer.

In addition, Article 76 of the PSWiN Act specifies what requirements must be met in order to complete and obtain a degree. In particular, it is required to:

- 1) achieve the learning outcomes specified in the study programme and the minimum number of ECTS credits depending on the level of study:
 - 180 ECTS credits for first-cycle studies,
 - 90 ECTS credits for second-cycle studies,
 - 300 ECTS credits for nine- or 10-semester long-cycle studies,
 - 360 ECTS credits for 11- or 12-semester long-cycle studies;
- 2) taking the diploma examination;
- 3) a positive assessment of the diploma thesis – in the case of second-cycle studies and long-cycle studies, and in the case of first-cycle studies, insofar as this is provided for in the study programme.

In addition, the Act indicates what a diploma thesis is⁷⁴ and imposes an obligation to verify it before the diploma examination with the use of the Uniform Anti-Plagiarism System. The Constitution for Science also sets requirements for persons under whose supervision the diploma thesis may be prepared in the case of second-cycle studies and long-cycle studies – it may be a person holding at least a PhD degree.

It is also worth noting that at the statutory level in Poland, it is also specified when the studies end – as a rule, pursuant to Article 76 (7) of the PSWiN Act, the date of study completion is the date of submission of the diploma examination, and the date of submission of the last examination required by the study programme in the case of studies

in the fields of medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine, and in the case of studies in the fields of pharmacy and physiotherapy – the date of completion of the last traineeship required by the study programme.

Finally, it should also be emphasised that Polish legislation also defines a closed catalogue of professional titles conferred upon completion of a given level of higher education. In principle, these are⁷⁵:

- 1) a Bachelor's degree, an Engineer's degree or equivalent confirming higher education at the same level – in the case of first-cycle studies;
- 2) a Master's degree, Master engineer or equivalent confirming higher education at the same level – in the case of second-cycle and long-cycle studies.

Equivalent titles are laid down in the MNiSW Regulation on Studies⁷⁶. In addition, when a diploma and a diploma supplement are issued in a foreign language transcript, the professional title and the result of the studies are not translated into a foreign language and remain in the Polish language⁷⁷.

Finally, Article 73(1) of the PSWiN Act provides that courses shall be taught by academic staff **employed in a given higher education institution** who have the competence and experience to deliver the courses properly and by other persons who have such competence and experience. On the other hand, Article 73(2) of the Act provides that within a programme of study with the following profile:

- 1) practical profile – at least 50% of the course hours shall be taught by academic staff **employed in the institution as the place of their primary employment**;
- 2) general-academic profile – at least 75% of course hours shall be taught by academic staff **employed in the institution as the place of their primary employment**.

In the case of joint studies, the Constitution for Science provides for certain exceptions from the requirements listed above. In the case of such degree programmes provided by a foreign higher education institution which has established a degree programme on the basis of Article 53, section 7 (i.e. on its own, without the requirement to obtain the consent of the minister), the provisions of Article 73, section 2 (a requirement of 50% or 75% of course hours taught by academic staff employed in a higher education institution as the place of their primary employment) and the legislation adopted on the basis of Article 81 as referred to in Article 81, section 1 (degree programme requirements) shall not apply. However, the Act does not stipulate how the staff of a foreign institution should be employed to conduct classes as part of such studies in a Polish institution, or what detailed requirements should be met by the curriculum of such studies. Nor does the Act provide for exemptions or special regulations concerning the completion of joint studies, which means that regardless of the national regulations in force in our partner's country, the date of completion of joint studies should in principle be the date of the diploma examination. How should we proceed, then, when the stages of the diploma process at a foreign university are different or take place in a different time sequence? This is not settled by the law.

Simultaneously, it is worth noting the far-reaching doubts concerning the continued possibility of providing education by Polish universities which concluded agreements on the basis of the previously binding Act. Article 217 of the Introductory Act of PSWiN stipulates that joint studies referred to in Article 168 of the previous law become joint studies. It is not clear, however, how a Polish university should continue to provide such degree programmes in fields of study which offer the possibility of following a “standard” curriculum and graduating only with a diploma from a Polish university, and the possibility of following a “joint” curriculum and graduating with a diploma from a Polish university and a diploma from a partner university (the so-called double degree). The new law does not allow for courses in a field, level and profile with the same name or whose programmes specify the same learning outcomes assigned to the same discipline. This raises the question of whether several variants of a programme of study, including a “joint” programme of study, can be provided within an existing course of study?

On the basis of the current legislation, it seems that it is not possible for more than one study programme to apply in one field of study – all students should achieve the same learning outcomes defined for that field of study. However, it is possible for the same field of study to have different specialisations, diploma paths or education pathways. The law previously in force allowed for the diversification of education in a given field of study as part of a specialisation. The current law does not prohibit this possibility. It seems, therefore, that if a foreign partner university would like to establish cooperation with a Polish university with respect to higher education within an existing field of study, it may shape the conditions for joint teaching and degrees while observing all formal and legal requirements stipulated in the Act and executive regulations, and

this not only in the case of foreign students, but also of students who commenced studies through a recruitment procedure.

It is also worth pointing out a certain inconsistency in the solutions introduced by the Constitution for Science with regard to taking up higher education by persons with and without Polish citizenship. Polish citizens who apply for admission to higher education studies in Poland may only be admitted through enrolment, confirmation of learning outcomes or transfer from another university or institution abroad⁷⁸. In addition, the Act requires that admission to studies takes place through entry onto the list of students⁷⁹. As far as foreigners are concerned, Article 323(1)(2) of the PSWiN Act stipulates that they may enter and pursue higher education either on the basis of an administrative decision of the rector of a higher education institution or **on the basis of agreements concluded with foreign entities by higher education institutions, according to the rules stipulated in such agreements**. Doubts may therefore arise as to how to determine the mode of admission to joint studies when applicants come from different countries. Consideration should also be given to which document will form the basis for admission to a joint study programme or a joint education course. In my opinion, every student, irrespective of their citizenship and irrespective of the basis on which they were enrolled, should be entered onto the students’ list, as confirmed by an appropriate document, such as an

⁷⁵ See Article 77 (1) of the PSWiN Act.

⁷⁶ See Chapter 7. *Professional titles equivalent to the bachelor’s and engineering degrees and the master’s and engineering degrees* - § 29 - § 31.

⁷⁷ See § 22 (2) of the MNiSW Regulation on Studies.

⁷⁸ See Article 69 (1) of the PSWiN Act.

⁷⁹ See Article 72 (2) of the PSWiN Act.

enrolment card or a confirmation of enrolment, and the detailed procedure for enrolment can be laid down in such an agreement or contract.

As regards inconsistencies in the solutions introduced by the new Act, it should also be noted that Article 323(1)(2) of Act 2.0 gives the possibility to take up higher education studies, without limiting it to joint studies or to a newly created field of study specifically intended for foreign students. Thus, such agreements may provide for joint education and degrees within an existing field of study, the completion of which may lead to the award of two degrees at the same time – from a Polish and a foreign university (with the assumption, of course, that a student who decides on such an education must fulfil all the requirements provided for in the programme, both at the Polish university and at the partner university). However, a question arises as to whether such an opportunity exists for Polish students who have already undertaken higher education studies at a Polish university and would like to take advantage of such an offer from a foreign partner university? It seems that the new law does not prohibit such an option, but we will not find an answer in the currently binding provisions.

Finally, it is impossible not to draw attention to the fact that in the case where joint education or joint studies will be undertaken by both Polish and foreign students, a doubt arises as to the possibility of charging fees for education. In the case of public higher education institutions, as a rule, full-time studies in the Polish language for persons of Polish nationality are free of charge; exceptions in this respect are provided for in Article 79, section 1 of the PSWiN Act, e.g. where there is a possibility to charge tuition fees for studies conducted in a foreign language. In the case of foreigners, on the other hand, paid education is the rule, but the Act allows for the possibility of exemption from the tuition fee (in particular for studies

conducted both in Polish and in a foreign language) according to the rules specified in an agreement between the universities. Therefore, bearing in mind the different principles concerning tuition fees in force in different countries, this issue, too, requires deeper analysis and appropriate arrangements between universities, especially from the perspective of equal treatment of students.

A CHALLENGE - VARIOUS EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Joint education or joint studies are also a challenge from the perspective of different education systems, especially non-European systems. Particularly acute is the incompatibility and diversity of educational systems and degrees awarded around the world, as well as the various requirements for setting up and running higher education, and the requirements for study programmes.

For example, constructing a study programme based on the language of learning outcomes with the allocation of ECTS credits according to the European Credit Transfer System is only known in Europe. In addition, in Polish legislation there is also an obligation to assign a given course of study to one of two profiles: general academic or practical.

It is also worth noting that the Polish higher education system does not correspond to foreign regulations regarding the duration of engineering studies. In Poland, full-time first-cycle studies, within the framework of which engineering competences are acquired (engineering studies), may last no less than 7 semesters, while full-time second-cycle studies may last no less than 3 semesters. Therefore, in the case of Polish universities, which educate engineers in the formula of 7+3 studies, there are often problems with adjusting the duration of second-cycle studies if they were to be conducted as joint studies. In practice, the foreign partner university often

requires the first-cycle studies to last only 6 semesters, and second-cycle studies 4 semesters, which in the case of Polish students who have completed their first-cycle engineering studies in Poland may mean the need to extend the education by at least one semester.

Moreover, as it has already been mentioned, some educational systems do not provide for the obligation to submit a diploma thesis or the sequence of activities related to graduation is different – first the diploma examination is required and only then the thesis is submitted, to which comments may still be made by the thesis supervisor.

Finally, doubts may also arise in the case of the desire to undertake cooperation and joint education and degree programmes with foreign universities, whose educational systems provide for education in a uniform system, of at least 5 years, without the need to obtain a degree between the third and fourth year of studies – this is the case, for example, in prestigious French *grande école* universities. *Grandes écoles* are higher education institutions typical of the French system, where the education lasts for 5 years (including 2 years of preparatory education). They allow to obtain a Master's degree after 5 years of study, so they are considered long-cycle studies.

Between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the French Republic, an agreement on mutual recognition of documents authorising entry to higher education, periods of study, diplomas, titles and degrees has been in force since 2009. According to Article 5 of this agreement, a diploma confirming the attainment of a licence issued in the French Republic entitles to apply for admission to second-cycle studies in Poland. On the other hand, according to Article 69, paragraph 3 of the new Act, a person who has a diploma of graduation may be admitted to a second-cycle programme. In view of the above, it appears that the current legislation does

not provide for the possibility of admitting persons who do not have any university degree, including joint degrees, to second-cycle studies. There is also a lack of regulations and practices in the Polish higher education area which would allow for the recognition of study periods abroad as an “educational level equivalent” to the completion of a first-cycle.

In developing cooperation with French *grandes écoles*, both within the framework of joint education programmes (the so-called double degrees) and joint studies, it would be important to have an official decision concerning the possibility of admission to second-cycle studies in Poland on the basis of an internal document confirming the completion of a certain number of semesters of studies at the *grande école* and obtaining 180 ECTS points. If this is not possible, it would be necessary to identify possible ways forward, in order to enable the implementation of the existing joint education agreements.

It is worth emphasising that the current Polish regulations, in particular the *Law on Higher Education and Science*, do not provide for any requirements with respect to foreign universities. Therefore, since we are talking about different education systems, when establishing cooperation in this area, it is worth paying attention to whether the university with which we are going to cooperate, if it is not known to us, operates in the higher education system of a given country, whether it has any accreditations and whether it can create and initiate the studies within which the joint education will be conducted on its own, or whether the consent or permission of the relevant national authorities is required, e.g. the Ministry of Education or Higher Education. If a foreign university already offers such studies, it is also worth paying attention to whether they are higher education studies and allow for continuing education at the next level, or whether they are the so-called short-term

studies, post-secondary school studies or training that does not result in the acquisition of any professional title in the country concerned or is not treated as completion of a higher education⁸⁰. It may turn out that, due to certain national restrictions or legal regulations in this respect, the willingness of a foreign university to run a joint education programme with a Polish university will constitute a gateway or opportunity to circumvent such regulations.

Different education systems have different systems of accreditation of universities and fields of study. However, there are no precise guidelines on how joint programmes and joint studies should be accredited – whether they are to be accredited by national agencies (e.g. Polish Accreditation Commission) or by international accreditation committees (e.g. The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education [ENQA], The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education [INQAAHE]). Perhaps it would be good practice to require partner universities to submit a declaration that they are accredited and operating in their higher education system in accordance with the applicable rules.

ORGANISATIONAL AND FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

The preparation, organisation and conduct of joint education or joint studies is a great challenge. It requires the involvement of many units and persons on the part of the university – the rector’s authorities, the dean’s authorities and the administrative services subordinate to them (responsible for cooperation with foreign countries, organisation of education at the university, dealing with services for foreign students, legal and IT services).

The biggest organisational challenge is definitely the preparation and realisation of a study programme that would meet all the requirements, both on the part of Polish and foreign university, both in terms of content and law. One should also take into account the rules stipulating who at a given university establishes such a programme and according to what procedure – Polish legislation requires that a study programme should be established by the senate⁸¹.

When preparing the study programme, it is also worth paying attention to the study schedule or the projected timetable for the delivery of such a programme in individual semesters and years of the course cycle, in particular in the context of the division of responsibilities between individual universities and the delivery of specific classes in a given semester at a given university. This is important not only from the point of view of the student (which university and which classes he/she will take, and whether this will require any additional activities), but also from the point of view of the organisation of education at the university, in particular with respect to covering the costs of education, planning classes and teaching loads of the teaching staff (salary hours and overtime hours), as well as ensuring adequate infrastructure, in particular

⁸⁰ Such situations may be encountered, inter alia, in Ukraine (e.g. short-term university studies lasting either 2-3 years or 3-4 years, depending on the duration of previous education, leading to a diploma of a junior specialist [Ukr. *молодший спеціаліст*] or a diploma of a junior baccalaureate [Ukr. *молодший бакалавр*]), in China (e.g. *zhuanke* studies, which last 2-3 years in full-time mode or 3-4 years in part-time mode, and the graduates are not given any title – they receive only a graduation certificate), in France (e.g. *diplôme universitaire de technologie* [DUT] – a diploma of a university institute of technology, awarded after completing a study programme usually lasting 2 years; *brevet de technicien supérieur* [BTS] – a diploma of a senior technician, also awarded after completing a 2-year study programme) or in Nigeria (e.g. short-term study programmes run by non-university higher education institutions: polytechnics and colleges, which end with a national diploma, higher national diploma or *Nigeria Certificate in Education*).

⁸¹ See Article 28 (1) (11) of the PSWiN Act.

⁸² See Article 75 of the PSWiN Act.

specialist laboratories or workshops, and access to adequate library resources.

In order to ensure the high quality of joint studies, it is also necessary to ensure the selection of appropriate teaching staff (academic teachers or other persons conducting classes, thesis supervisors, reviewers) who will be able to cope with the difficulties of course delivery, not only in terms of content, but also language.

Finally, it is also a huge challenge to draw up a contract or agreement for joint studies or joint education. However, before universities start drafting specific provisions, it is worth agreeing on some key organisational issues, particularly in the following areas:

1. Recruitment, admission or qualification for studies – it is worth considering and determining the conditions and mode or method of candidate selection (determining which university qualifies students – does each university establish such rules and recruit on its own, and the partner university recognises students nominated by the home university) or whether universities jointly establish such rules and conduct recruitment together), recruitment dates (taking into account the organisation and structure of the academic year at each university, especially the start and end dates of the year and the planned period of the examination session, as well as the so-called diploma period), limits of admissions or the minimum and maximum planned number of places for students participating in joint education, as well as the documents required from them, especially regarding education and confirming the knowledge of the language in which the studies will be conducted, the manner, mode and place of submitting documents as well as verification and recognition by all universities; it is also worth agreeing what documents will confirm the fact of admission to

a given university. It also seems desirable to establish the principles of organisational support for students in connection with their arrival in a given country (e.g. organisation of accommodation or defining the rules of obtaining a place in a student dormitory, informing students of the obligation to have health insurance, if required, informing students of the obligations related to the legalisation of their stay, e.g. obtaining a visa or residence card, if applicable).

2. Detailed rules for the organisation of the course of study and the related rights and obligations of students pursuing a course of study as part of joint studies or a joint degree programme at a given higher education institution. In this regard, it is particularly worth determining whether a foreign university has a document similar to the study regulations provided for in Polish law⁸² and what the student's rights and obligations result from, especially in terms of participation in classes, obtaining credits for individual classes, subjects or courses, stages of study (semesters or years of study), taking exams, completing apprenticeships and meeting other requirements provided for in the study programme; it is also worth considering the consequences for students in the event of a lack of learning progress or the student's failure to implement the programme at the partner university, or in the event of study breaks (leave from classes) or resignation from studies.
3. Rules for the recognition of credits (subjects, courses, course modules) and resulting grades at the partner university, including the rules for conversion to the grading scale applicable at the given university, rules for the accumulation and transfer of ECTS credits, especially when these credits are not obligatory at the partner university or there is a different system of accumulation of credits

required to complete a given stage of study and/or degree programme. It is also worth deciding which documents and in which language will confirm the completion of a particular stage of a study programme at a given university (e.g. study progress card, transcript of records/evaluation card).

4. The rules, procedure and dates for charging tuition fees, if any, and other fees related to the stay in a given higher education institution, e.g. fees for a place in a student dormitory.
5. Possible funding opportunities for accommodation or travel in the form of a scholarship, and the arrangements for their payment to students.
6. The diploma process - in this respect, not only the conditions for completing studies as set out in the study programme will be important, but also the requirements connected with the preparation of a diploma thesis (at least one) and admission to the diploma examination. From the organisational point of view, it will also be important to determine the rules, procedure and organisation of the diploma examination (in particular whether it will be one or several diploma examinations, in which institution it will be conducted, if it will be conducted remotely by means of electronic communication, what the scope will be, how the composition of the commission conducting such an examination will be determined, whether it will be one commission consisting of representatives of the institutions, or whether each institution will conduct such an examination on its own). It will also be important to specify the method for determining the assessment of the diploma thesis and the diploma examination, as well as to define the final result of the studies to be included on the diploma and the grading scale applicable when determining these grades,

and possibly the method of conversion into the scale applicable at individual universities. Finally, as far as organisational matters are concerned, it will also be necessary to establish how the diploma examination protocol will be drawn up⁸³ and what the date of graduation will be, as this is of considerable importance from the point of view of the statutory deadline for issuing the graduation diploma⁸⁴.

7. Determining the rules for issuing degrees - whether a joint degree will be issued, and if so, one or more (Polish regulations allow for the possibility of issuing separate degrees by each university conducting the joint studies⁸⁵) and according to which model (Polish regulations do not impose a diploma template, but the necessary elements that should be included - the diploma template must, however, be approved by the university senate⁸⁶); however, due to the current regulations of the Act on Public Documents⁸⁷, which qualifies a higher education diploma as a public document of the second category⁸⁸ and sets minimum levels of protection against forgery⁸⁹, the introduction of a specific separate template for the joint diploma will require the approval of the Special

⁸³ Cf. § 18 (1) of the MNiSW Regulation on Studies specifies in detail the required elements of such a protocol.

⁸⁴ Article 77 (2) of the PSWiN Act obliges Polish higher education institutions to issue a diploma to a graduate within 30 days of graduation, together with a diploma supplement and two copies of the diploma.

⁸⁵ Cf. § 34 of the MNiSW Regulation on Studies.

⁸⁶ See Article 77 (3) of the PSWiN Act.

⁸⁷ See the *Act of 22 November 2018 on Public Documents* (i.e. Journal of Laws of 2020, item 725, as further amended), hereinafter referred to as UDP.

⁸⁸ See Article 5 (3) of the UDP and § 2 (5) of the *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 11 July 2019 on the list of public documents* (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1289).

⁸⁹ See Article 7 and the *Regulation of the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration of 2 July 2019 on the list of minimum safeguards for public documents against forgery* (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1281).

Committee on Public Documents operating at the Ministry of Interior and Administration. It is also worth noting that in Poland, as in more than 40 countries around the world, mainly European countries, a diploma supplement is issued along with the graduation diploma, which is to present full information related to the studies completed by the person named on the diploma, including in particular, information about the learning outcomes and credits (not only at the university where the classes are conducted, but across the entire study programme), as well as about the status of the university providing the education. It would therefore be desirable to determine whether such a document is issued in the partner country and, if so, according to which model and according to what rules.

From an organisational point of view, it is also worth agreeing on issues related to formal and substantive supervision for the implementation of joint studies or joint education. In particular, it may be helpful to establish a special body (programme council, steering committee, programme committee, executive committee) composed of representatives of the university, which will not only supervise the course of studies and the realisation of the programme, credible modifications or improvement, but may also be responsible for a possible evaluation of the programme, if necessary (e.g. in the form of preparing a report on the realisation of the assumed objectives and learning outcomes).

It may also be helpful for each university to appoint or establish a supervisor or contract coordinator (or contact person) responsible for all the organisational issues arising during the course of the studies.

Finally, in order to ensure the best possible organisation of the teaching process, administrative matters cannot be overlooked. Therefore, it is worth agreeing

and preparing appropriate procedures, model documents and information in advance for partner universities at the level of administrative staff before starting a joint studies or joint education programme. This may prove particularly important in the context of keeping records of the course of studies (establishing and maintaining student personal files, preparing and issuing student ID cards, completing and verifying, as well as preparing and issuing documents related to enrolment, course of studies and graduation, noting the course of studies and students' credits and their appropriate conversion into the applicable grading scale, referral to appropriate medical examinations, if required), verification of possible fees, payment of scholarships, if any, ensuring access to IT systems for students and academic staff, and, most importantly, preparing and issuing the diploma of studies with a supplement.

Finally, we must mention the reporting issues that may affect the funding of studies. While in the case of Polish students undertaking joint studies or joint education at a Polish university as their home institution, the reporting issues seem clear; in the case of foreign students pursuing such education, nominated by a foreign partner university in order to complete a part of their joint studies (a semester or several semesters) at a Polish university, the matter is not so obvious. In the light of the algorithm for the distribution of subsidies to public universities⁹⁰ and the data transmitted for the needs of public statistics to the Central Statistical Office within the Integrated Information System on Higher Education and Science POL-on, it is not clear how foreign students taking part in joint studies should be treated - are they full-time students (within the so-called vertical mobility) or students taking part in a particular stage of the studies (within the so-called horizontal mobility)? It seems that they should be qualified as undergoing a full cycle of education,

since they graduate from a Polish university and receive a diploma of graduation in Poland. However, this is not clear from the regulations.

JOINT STUDIES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE AGH

AGH's priority in the area of education is first and foremost a constant and comprehensive concern for quality at all levels of education. We want to educate students with the highest professional qualifications, who are mobile and enterprising both during their studies and professional work. Our priority is also further development of the internationalisation of studies and the enrichment of the educational offer (both in current fields of study and newly created ones), in particular by developing the possibility for the best and the brightest students (both Polish and foreign) to realise their studies in collaboration with foreign universities, with which we have long-standing cooperation in many areas.

Foreign partner universities, with which the AGH actively cooperates, wish to continue cooperation in the field of joint education and degrees for a selected group of students, but within the framework of existing courses, not necessarily by creating new courses. While there are ideas to create and run an entirely new joint degree programme, work has also been underway for almost a year to create one joint degree programme in collaboration with a university in Japan. However, concerns are raised about the financing and cost-effectiveness of such studies.

Conducting and organising joint studies or joint education, despite many challenges, can offer opportunities not only for increasing internationalisation (increasing the mobility of students and academic staff). It can also be an excellent opportunity to exchange experiences in the implementation of the educational process in different educational systems, as well as to make the educational offer more attractive and to enrich it, and to increase the position of graduates of such studies in the international labour market. However, as can be seen from the above, it poses quite a challenge, above all in legislative and organisational terms. Perhaps the comprehensive answers to at least some of the questions posed earlier, defining certain frameworks or guidelines in this respect would have a positive impact on the realisation of joint studies and joint education by AGH and many Polish universities. It would also be a significant contribution to the internationalisation process of all higher education in Poland.

⁹⁰ Cf. *Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 9 September 2019 on the method of allocating funds for maintaining and developing teaching potential and research potential at the disposal of the minister responsible for higher education and science and for tasks related to maintenance of training aircrafts and specialist aircraft personnel training centres* (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1838, as further amended).

Joint studies conducted with foreign academic bodies and mutual recognition of diplomas

SYLWESTER TABOR, PHD,
BAGRENG, DSC, PROFITIT

Hugo Kołataj
University
of Agriculture
in Cracow

-----Rector of the University of Agriculture in Cracow, a graduate of the Faculty of Agricultural Technology and Power Engineering of the Agricultural Academy in Cracow, where he obtained his Master's degree in agricultural mechanisation in 1989 and began work. In 1997, he obtained a doctoral degree, in 2007 he became a habilitated PhD in agricultural sciences in the field of agricultural engineering. He took up the position of associate professor in 2011 and has been a university professor since 2019. In 2008-2012, he was Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Production Engineering and Energy, and from 2012 (for two terms) he held the position of Vice-Rector for Teaching and Student Affairs at the University of Agriculture in Cracow. In 2007- 2011, he was Secretary of the Board of the Polish Society of Agricultural Engineering and a member of the Board of the Polish Society for IT Applications in Agriculture, Forestry and Food POL-SITA. In 2012, he was appointed member of PKA; he was an expert of the Marshal of the Silesian Voivodeship on the development of the Rural Development Strategy of the Silesian Voivodeship until 2030. Since September 2020, he has been a member of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (KRASP) – he is a member of the KRASP Audit Committee for the term 2020-2024. In October 2020, he was appointed Member of the Scientific Council of the Polish Ecological Club Małopolska. Since June 2021, he has been part of the Council for Agriculture and Rural Affairs under the President of the Republic of Poland and the Council for Labour and Development under the Ministry of Development, Labour and Technology.

He specialises in the economics of agricultural mechanisation and in the organisation and management in agricultural engineering. His scientific and implementation achievements include the analysis and optimisation of processes, taking into account the application of IT solutions – from simple manufacturing and production processes carried out in the food industry sector to complex processes of team and organisation management. He is the author and co-author of over 100 original scientific works, including six monographs (two as a scientific editor), the author of 23 expert opinions commissioned by enterprises and economic institutions and six popular science studies.



MICHAŁ JERZY ZASADA,
PHD, DSC, PROFITIT
Warsaw University
of Life Sciences

Rector of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW), Vice-Chairman of KRASP. Professor of Forest Sciences in the Department of Forest Management, Dendrometry and Economics of Forestry at the SGGW, member of the Committee on Forestry Sciences and Wood Technology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, member of the Polish Forestry Association, board member of CASEE – the ICA Regional Network for Central and South Eastern Europe. Prof. M. Zasada's scientific interests focus mainly on dendrometry, forest productivity science and forest management, especially modelling of tree and stand growth, modern forest measurement methods and application of decision support systems in forest management planning. He is the author of over 120 scientific publications, including more than 50 in journals with Impact Factor.

He was a supervisor of 4 completed doctoral dissertations dealing with the influence of habitat conditions on the radial growth of Norway spruce in north-eastern Poland and the Baltic countries, dendroecology of Schrenka spruce in Kyrgyzstan and the history, status and perspectives of introduction of Douglas fir in Poland and grand-leaved spruce in Germany. He is currently the scientific supervisor of three PhD students.

He was a reviewer in four habilitation and six doctoral dissertations.

For his scientific and organisational activities he has been repeatedly awarded by the Rector of the SGGW in Warsaw.

In 2015, he received the Silver Medal for Long-term Service, and in 2018 – the Silver Cross of Merit.



The positive effects of globalisation in the field of science have been, inter alia, the rapid flow of knowledge and the internationalisation of research results. This course of action was indicated by Daria Lipińska-Nałęcz, PhD, DSc⁹¹ already in 2012, pointing out that the “internationalisation of higher education has become an increasingly important element in the assessment of its quality over recent years”.⁹² And although 10 years have passed since then,

these activities make it even more possible to conduct study courses together and for graduates to have their diplomas recognised. There are also many indications that the significance of education in several academic centres will become more important in the near future.

For the entirety of the presented topic – covering both studies and recognition of diplomas – the key provision is Article 60, section 1 of the *Law on Higher Education and Science*, hereinafter referred to as the “Act”, which indicates that “a higher education institution may run joint studies with another higher education institution, an institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, a research institute, an international institute, a foreign university or a scientific institution. The rules of cooperation shall be laid down in an agreement concluded in writing, which shall in particular indicate the entity responsible for the input of data into the system referred to in Article 342, section 1 [this refers to the POL-on system – note by ST, MJZ] and entitled to receive funding for the teaching of students in full-time programmes conducted jointly”⁹³. This provision indicates that such cooperation is based on the terms of a bilateral or multilateral agreement. However, it should be kept in mind that such provisions must comply with the law generally applicable in all countries party to the act. On the basis of this document, a graduate of joint studies may obtain a joint degree satisfying the requirements laid down in the provisions issued pursuant to Article 81 of the Act, in the scope referred to in Article 81 (9). These delegations refer to model diplomas that are defined by the ministry responsible for higher education in each country.

The possibility described in the cited provision of the Act functions as a joint degree. Studying under this system means that the universities – parties to the agreement – issue a single joint degree with all the safeguards required in the countries concerned and containing the necessary information. However, it may become necessary to initiate a discretionary procedure due to its “visual dissimilarity” from the common patterns in the country. This should not be discouraged, however, as each country (signatory to the agreement concluded by the universities) has specialised agencies to assist in this regard.

The Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters (EMJM) second-cycle studies operate along very similar lines. These are “high-quality integrated programmes at the Masters level [...] developed and delivered through an international partnership of higher education institutions from different countries around the world”⁹⁴. The programme of such joint studies must be recognised by the partner universities and comply with the formal requirements of the country concerned, and the partners should recognise all learning activities together with their associated learning outcomes and forms of validation. The most important practical difference between joint degrees and EMJM is that, in most cases, the joint degree is paid for by the student (unless otherwise specified in the agreement), while Erasmus Mundus provides funding for both the study and stay in a given country.

⁹¹ Daria Lipińska-Nałęcz, PhD, DSc, historian, from 2012 to 2015 Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

⁹² A. Bielecka, B. Skibińska, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

⁹³ Act of 20 July 2018 *Law on Higher Education and Science* (i.e. Journal of Laws of 2021, item 478, as further amended), accessed: 29.06.2021.

⁹⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/individuals/students/erasmus-mundus-joint-masters-scholarships.pl>, accessed: 29.06.2021.

Another common procedure, much simpler to implement, is the double degree programme. In this case, by studying at two universities, the graduate receives two degrees, from both the domestic and foreign university – each issued in the native language and in accordance with the standard set by the regulations.

This means removing the requirements necessary for the recognition of degrees and qualifications.

If you decide to study in several countries, you should bear in mind that, despite the declaration of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA), there is still no coherent model for the automatic recognition of diplomas in the European Union. A substitute is the ECTS system for calculating and comparing competences and student workload. Nevertheless, the lack of a complete and simple procedure for the recognition of diplomas results from the already mentioned fact of national autonomy in shaping guidelines for learning outcomes⁹⁵. To avoid the unpleasant surprise of a non-recognition of a diploma, it is worth checking whether the country in which the young person intends to continue his/her education or work honours the qualifications he/she has obtained.

While still in Poland, you can use the NAWA website, where full studies “on selected foreign higher education systems” are available under the “recognition” tab. Each of these studies contains a diagram presenting the higher education system functioning in a given country, descriptions of individual levels of study and names of titles and degrees obtained, scale of assessments, list of recognised universities, a table facilitating the assessment of foreign diplomas from the point of view of Polish law, as well as examples of these diplomas and accompanying documents⁹⁶. This tab also contains very important guidance on the activities of the European Network of Information Centres (ENIC) and the National Academic Recognition Information Centres

(NARIC)⁹⁷. The ENIC network brings together the countries of the Lisbon Convention and provides assistance in obtaining information on the functioning and legal basis of national education systems and the recognition of education. NARIC centres, on the other hand, form a network with similar tasks, limiting their activity to EU countries.

Studying at several universities in different countries is an excellent solution and should not be feared. It gives unique educational and cultural experience. At the same time, it seems worth remembering that the acquisition of formal education is an administrative process and, for this reason, it is necessary to comply with all the provisions resulting from the programme or the agreement in force between the universities. The scope of these regulations can and should be verified by means of available applications and websites. The information contained therein shows that the period of verification of the diploma and the level of qualification depends both on the country in which the studies were conducted and on the complexity and completeness of the documents sent. When submitting documents, it is advisable to submit them in Europass format, which makes them much easier to verify. What is important, however, is that this process may last up to a few months. This means that the legal situation must be verified in advance and not put off until the last moment. It should also be noted that the applicant will have to pay for some of the activities. An appeals process is also provided for, but this requires much more commitment on the part of the student.

One of the biggest problems still facing the higher education system in Europe in terms of joint study programmes and recognition of diplomas remains the lack of clear guidance on how to proceed from involvement in programme preparation, through the delivery of learning outcomes to the recognition of qualifications⁹⁸ and diplomas held. Many years of experience of entities implementing studies jointly with foreign scientific institutions shows that difficulties may be caused, among others, by such issues as:

- duration of studies (three years or 3.5 years in Poland vs. three or four years in other countries in the case of first-cycle studies and 1.5 years second-cycle studies after engineering studies in Poland vs. two-year Master's degree in other countries);
- specific requirements in study programmes, in particular in the field of subjects related to language, history, culture, philosophy or religion;
- the need to study for the required minimum period in a given country (usually three or four semesters in first-cycle studies and two semesters in second-cycle studies);
- differences in recruitment requirements;
- principles of recognition of learning outcomes;
- conditions for admission to writing a diploma thesis (mandatory blocks of subjects that can be completed only in a given country);

- rules for conducting diploma examinations, which in certain cases are state / external examinations or require a specific composition of the examination committee;
- the philosophy of designing a study programme (e.g. in terms of the proportion of subjects of a different nature or the definition of subjects to be selected);
- specific requirements of accreditation committees in individual countries.

All this makes the process of creating not only a *joint degree*, but also a *double degree* complex, requiring close cooperation between the stakeholders and reasonable flexibility. However, the growing offer of such accredited programmes proves that these difficulties can be overcome, and cooperation between universities, e.g. within the framework of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland, makes this process more and more familiar.

⁹⁵ <https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/education/university/recognition/index.pl.htm>, accessed: 29.06.2021.

⁹⁶ <https://nawa.gov.pl/uznawalnosc/opisy-zagranicznych-systemow-edukacji>, accessed: 29.06.2021.

⁹⁷ <https://nawa.gov.pl/uznawalnosc/dzialalnosc-osrodka-enic-naric>, accessed: 29.06.2021.

⁹⁸ More: <https://prk.men.gov.pl/uznawanie-zagranicznych-dyplomow-ukonczenia-studiow-wyzszych-i-stopni-naukowych/>, accessed: 29.06.2021.

The Katamaran Programme – NAWA support for Polish universities in the establishment and implementation of joint studies

KATARZYNA ALEKSY

Polish National Agency
for Academic Exchange

One of the activities at the national level aimed at encouraging Polish universities to establish and conduct joint studies with foreign partners is the Katamaran programme launched by NAWA in March 2019. Its main objective is to provide financial support to higher education institutions for the establishment and implementation of international study programmes for joint second-cycle studies leading to a joint or double degree and to increase the mobility of students and academic staff. Katamaran is implemented under the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development (POWER) co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). Two calls for proposals were open to public and non-public higher education institutions holding an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.

Director of the Department of Programmes for Institutions at the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA). Since 2007, at the Foundation for the Development of the Education System, she has worked in the Erasmus Programme, and in subsequent years as Director of Scholarship Programmes she was responsible for launching and managing the Scholarship and Training Fund under the Norwegian and European Economic Area (EEA) Funds and the SCIEX Scholarship Fund under the Swiss-Polish Cooperation Programme. From March 2017, she worked at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education on the concept of the establishment and functioning of NAWA. In 2020, she received the IROs Forum award for her contribution to the internationalisation of higher education at Polish universities. Session author, moderator and speaker at major international conferences in the field of higher education, including APAIE, NAFSA and EAIE. Member of the MEiN Advisory Panel on the European Union Initiative “European Universities”. Representative of NAWA in the Academic Cooperation Association Council.



The first call was announced in March 2019 and allowed for submitting applications in two paths (path A – *Creating international joint second-cycle study programmes and starting recruitment for studies*, and path B – *Support for academic mobility under the existing international joint second-cycle studies*). The maximum amount of co-financing for one project in path A was PLN 700,000,

and in path B - PLN 1,000,000. In this call, 16 projects were selected out of 26 applications submitted. Interestingly, only one project was co-financed under path B concerning support for already functioning joint studies. The remaining universities applying for funds opted for path A, i.e. the preparation of joint second-cycle studies. Half of the entities that received funds are technical universities. The list of winners also included five universities, as well as a medical university, a natural science university and one non-public university. Polish institutions planned to cooperate both with entities from Western European countries (France, Italy, Spain, Portugal) and with their close neighbours (Ukraine, the Czech Republic). The partners also included universities from Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Uzbekistan and Japan. The list of successful projects includes a whole range of interesting programmes. Energy transformation, aviation management, history in the public space, food technology and human nutrition, health technology assessment – to name just a few. A total of 20 student mobilities within the so-called mobility windows and 146 exchanges of academic staff related to the creation of new joint study programmes were planned in 16 projects.

The second call was launched in February 2020, and universities were able to apply for funding to implement their existing joint second-cycle studies – both as part of NAWA-funded projects and outside the agency's funding. The maximum budget of one project was determined by NAWA at PLN 1,000,000. Thirteen applications were received in the call for proposals, out of which seven best applications were selected in the evaluation process. One of the universities withdrew from signing the agreement, so six entities joined the project, including two polytechnics, one art college, a university of natural sciences and two non-public universities. They established cooperation with Western European partners (Italy,

Germany) and Eastern partners (Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan). Among the joint study programmes in place are: interior design, electronics and telecommunications, space technology, modern engineering in water management, political science, logistics. One hundred and forty-four student mobility and 80 exchanges of academic staff were planned in this edition of the programme.

In June 2021, NAWA conducted a survey among the coordinators of the Katamaran projects. Completed questionnaires were returned by 18 of the 22 participating universities. The questionnaire consisted of four questions regarding the motivation for preparing/implementing joint studies, the impact of the project on changes in the functioning of the university, the results and products achieved, as well as challenges during the preparation/implementation of the studies (including the context of the COVID-19 pandemic) and conclusions and recommendations that may be helpful in developing joint study programmes and in designing programmes to support their implementation.

Project coordinators mentioned the need to develop the university in terms of internationalisation, strengthening the institution's potential, making the teaching offer more attractive, among other things, as motivations for preparing joint studies and using the funding opportunities under the Katamaran programme⁹⁹:

The main reason for the attempt to develop a joint study programme with a foreign university was the desire to enrich the teaching offer with an attractive course of study conducted in English. Previous experience in the internationalisation of education led us to believe that such a course would attract ambitious secondary school

⁹⁹ The quotations are cited in their original form, without editing or proofreading (editorial note).

graduates to our university. [Częstochowa University of Technology]

The university's development strategy assumes in-depth internationalisation, an integral part of which is the development of a teaching offer aimed at foreign candidates. [Silesian University of Technology]

Successful cooperation with foreign partners has also played a significant role to date. Universities that chose to participate in the Katamaran programme created joint study programmes with previously checked institutions. The element of selecting a trusted partner also appeared in the recommendations:

A basic recommendation from our experience is that Partners should know and trust each other. Earlier projects effectively eliminate bad Partners. [Lublin University of Technology]

A number of questionnaires also mentioned the financial aspect. The possibility of obtaining funding encouraged universities to implement a costly undertaking, i.e. to create a joint study programme:

I very much appreciate the possibility of obtaining funding for the preparation of joint studies, which is very motivating and stimulating also for foreign partners. [Wrocław University]

The respondents also emphasised the positive impact of the project on the functioning of universities. They mentioned, for example, increasing the attractiveness of the offer for students, expanding knowledge and increasing the skills of employees, gaining new experiences:

We believe that the organisation of joint studies - exchange of experience between Polish and Russian youth and knowledge of academic staff - will be the greatest value. [The University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz]
The creation of the project allowed for a more practical adaptation to the requirements and challenges in the

current labour market [...]. [The Jagiellonian University]

Among the planned or already implemented results and products of the project, there were mainly study programmes prepared within the project, teaching materials (e.g. textbooks for specialist English), distance learning courses, publications and scientific conferences, as well as purchases of foreign literature to enrich the university's book collection and promotional materials:

The most important results of the programme include the developed programme of joint studies, foreign literature on public history purchased for the library and a film promoting studies in public history (including a mobility component to a partner French university). [Wrocław University]

The biggest challenges faced by project implementers were mobility restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The respondents stressed that they had to resign from meetings with partners. Although they could have been replaced in some parts by online conferences, the lack of direct contact and the suspension or limitation of the work of certain institutions and offices have made things difficult. The planned workshops or study visits had to be postponed:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the restriction of global transport, live meetings with project partners on behalf of SIT¹⁰⁰ could not take place; this problem was solved by organising regular meetings via an electronic platform, but not everything can be done this way (drafting and signing of documents, etc.). [AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow]

The respondents also mentioned a wide range of procedural, administrative and legal problems encountered during the implementation of the projects. The main challenge was, for example, differences in education systems and legal regulations between Poland and partner countries:

There is also a problem with double degrees. Our planned studies are to be completed with a double degree. However, if we want to create a degree programme leading to a joint degree, we are faced with absurd provisions in Polish law stipulating that degrees must be conferred solely in Polish. Such things are completely incomprehensible for our German partner. [Gdańsk University of Technology]

In the part of the questionnaire concerning conclusions, remarks and recommendations that may be helpful in developing joint study programmes and designing programmes supporting them, the respondents paid attention to aspects related to the preparation of universities for their implementation. Some of the comments also referred to national legal conditions, as well as differences between education systems in Poland and other countries:

Universities should prepare all relevant documentation concerning the studies (regulations of studies, traineeship, rules of awarding degrees, assessment) also in a foreign language. [John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin]

A challenge in designing joint studies is the issue of ECTS credits, which in some countries are converted quite differently from those within the EU. [The University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz]

NAWA was hoping for great interest in the Katamaran programme on the part of Polish universities, which is why it earmarked as much as PLN 40,000,000 for two calls for proposals. In both calls, however, fewer applications were submitted than expected. Therefore, less than PLN 13,000,000 was

used from the assumed amount. However, a small number of applications ensured a high success rate – all projects meeting the formal criteria and representing a high level of content were co-financed.

According to the agency, the low number of applicants was due to the circumstances facing Polish universities at the time. On the one hand, this may have been a manifestation of “market saturation” among Polish higher education institutions, as some of them implement joint degree programmes using other sources of funding, and new universities needed more time to develop and run joint programmes. The years 2019 and 2020 also mark the initial time of the implementation of Act 2.0 and significant changes, among others, organisational and legislative changes at Polish universities. In addition, elections of new rectorial authorities were taking place in 2020, and the COVID-19 pandemic broke out during the second call, while still at the application stage. This restricted academic mobility, including the possibility for students to meet physically with partners or to complete mobility windows at a foreign university.

Although the Katamaran programme calls have now closed, universities will still have the chance to obtain funding for activities related to the establishment and implementation of joint studies. Meanwhile, all activities eligible in the Katamaran programme have been included by NAWA in the Strategic Partnerships programme announced in autumn 2021. However, it is possible that the Katamaran programme will return to the agency’s programme offer in the future.

Joint studies - the experiences of Polish universities

In this chapter we will present texts by practitioners – university employees who are involved in international cooperation, including joint or double degree studies. The articles include examples of good practices from Polish higher education institutions which have successfully implemented joint or double degree programmes. The texts have been enriched by opinions of programme coordinators, foreign partners and graduates.

Double degree programme – prestige and challenge

GRZEGORZ MAZUREK,
PHD, DSC, PROFITIT
Kozminski University
in Warsaw (ALK)

CHALLENGES

Challenges related to the launch and implementation of double degree programmes focus on three areas: (1) negotiating agreements; (2) aligning course content prior to the launch; and (3) ongoing issues during the programmes. The number of programme differences should be minimised so that the double degree programme looks attractive to students. An additional challenge is the coordination of work between people from different administrative departments – deans and vice-deans or heads of studies, who carry out different tasks and have knowledge from different areas of university management.

Negotiating agreements requires establishing optimal conditions for both partner universities at the level of programme content and financial issues related, for example, to the number of places offered to incoming students. The solution lies, firstly, in taking the perspective of various internal stakeholders before entering into negotiations. This allows one to find out the needs and roles of the administrative departments that are directly involved in fulfilling and promoting the agreement (dean's office, international cooperation office, marketing office, dean, vice-deans, heads of studies). Secondly, it is also important to identify people with experience in negotiating international agreements and previous contacts with a given foreign institution (from

Rector of Kozminski University for the term 2020-2024, theoretician and practitioner of management and marketing, titular professor of social sciences, researcher at the Chair of Marketing at Kozminski University, director of the Research Centre for Digital Transformation of Economy and Society - CYBERMAN. In his research, teaching and consulting work, he specialises in the subject of digital transformation – the analysis of the influence of modern digital technologies on organisational management, in particular e-marketing, e-business and e-education.



the international cooperation office, the international accreditation office, people who have held the position of dean or vice-dean in the past), as they are aware of possible problems or conflicts with a potential partner, but also of the willingness and possibilities to develop cooperation. Despite the need for individual solutions in each agreement, it is also advisable to develop a framework agreement structure for all partners and to strive to standardise this structure.

Programme alignment should be considered together with the challenge of negotiating an agreement, because it is related to programme content, i.e. bringing coherence to the courses in the programmes delivered by the two universities. This is difficult, because there are usually a lot of programme differences. The solution is for persons from the administrative

departments (dean's office, planning department), deans and vice-deans or heads of studies to review the course lists of both partner universities. ALK's experience can be summarised as follows: in the first instance, initial adjustment was carried out in relation to core/primary subjects in order to identify the potential scale of curriculum differences. Then, during the preparation of negotiations, the head of the dean's office, as the person with the most experience, together with the vice-dean or head of studies, makes a detailed adjustment of subjects in order to minimise administrative problems, e.g. connected with planning classes for students of partner universities. The final adjustment is agreed with the dean of the field of study concerned.

Current issues during the implementation of programmes often concern differences in administrative work, programme differences arising after the signing of an agreement, and changing conditions for applying to and studying at partner universities. These may be differences in the format of diplomas, their date of issue (e.g. the ALK diploma is issued in September and at the partner university in February). There are also differences in the requirements for language certificates between universities, despite the recognition of the same level of language (e.g. LCCI, British Council, TOEFL). With regard to student traineeship, they are not compulsory everywhere, and their duration is also different.

There are also differences in the academic calendar: start and end dates of the semester or year; it is necessary to plan classes individually for double degree students due to an earlier start of the semester at the partner university (e.g. a month earlier than at ALK). Changes in study programmes may also take place during the term of the agreement.

Another challenge is the difference between the number of incoming and outgoing students for bachelor and master studies compared to the provisions in the agreement. The problem may be the number of applicants in relation to the established limit of places for outgoing students.

Differences in culture and organisational structure between home and partner universities must also be taken into account: different distribution of responsibilities and flow of information, resulting in sometimes longer response times to e-mails and dispersed responsibilities.

The main solution is to establish the broadest possible content of the partnership agreement, allowing for flexibility to adapt to these changing conditions. Experience shows that it is best to sign a general agreement for the entire period of cooperation. Each year the details of the programme and other changing elements are adjusted in the form of an annex.

Regular contact between the designated permanent administrative officer and the dean/pro-dean/head of studies and their counterparts at the foreign institutions is also important. This allows for monitoring and early adjustment of corrective actions, i.e. those related to subject adjustment and informing home university students of these changes. In cases where there are differences in the numbers of incoming and outgoing students compared to the contractual provisions, an adjustment is made according to the principle of the relationship between the numbers of incoming and outgoing students in such a way that a balance is sought (so that the numbers are equal) calculated from time to time (once every few years, e.g. every second year). The total limit of places is taken into account, within which adjustments are made so that this does not result in annual financial settlements between the universities. The solution to the problem of a larger number of applicants than the allocated limit of places is a consistent and

transparent recruitment procedure at the university, taking into account the criteria of grade point average, activity at the university and outside it, and very good knowledge of English.

BENEFITS FOR THE UNIVERSITY

Double degree agreements are an important aspect of ALK's internationalisation in the context of developing study programmes, university recognition and international accreditation. Currently, the ALK double degree offers culturally diverse study opportunities at recognised partner universities in France (ESCP Business School, KEDGE Business School, SKEMA Business School, ESSCA School of Management, IÉSEG School of Management), Portugal (*Catolica Lisbon*, *ISEG - University of Lisbon*, *FEP - University of Porto*), United Kingdom (*Lancaster University*, *Aston Business School*), Ireland (*University of Limerick*), Germany (*Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg Mannheim*) and at universities located in countries outside Europe, such as Hong Kong (*Hong Kong Baptist University, HKBU*), Brazil (*Pontificia Universidade Católica do Paraná*). Double degree agreements signed with foreign universities facilitate agreements with subsequent partners. The prestige of ALK as an international university grows. The agreements allow for closer cooperation between academic staff from different research and development centres, resulting in greater exchange of lecturers and research collaboration. Cooperation with partner universities enables the exchange of best practices and ideas in the fields of teaching, research and programme management.

BENEFITS FOR THE STUDENTS

Thanks to the double degree programme, future business leaders have the opportunity to make and develop an international career. Participation in the programme is a prestigious prize for the student, which significantly increases his employability and chances for a higher pay. There is also increased satisfaction with the completed studies, confirmed by the positive experience of the participants. Students participating in the programme are a showcase for the university and often play the role of its ambassadors.

Most agreements assume payment only at the home university, with no additional tuition fees at the partner university, so the university offers valuable experience while optimising costs.

The creation of a mobility window within the study programme increases flexibility in the construction of students' schedules in terms of implementing double degree programmes – this reduces the number of programme differences.

Traineeships, seminars and summer schools offered by foreign partners (e.g. IÉSEG, Mannheim - bachelor level, KEDGE, ESSCA and SKEMA - masters level) give students the opportunity to improve their professional competences and expand their network of contacts, increasing their chances in the labour market. At the French partners, ALK students can participate in classes and extended traineeships.

ADVICE AND WARNINGS

A balance must be struck between an ambitious programme and the capabilities of the partner universities. Interesting and at the same time convergent programmes of both partners at the level of programme content increase the chances of eliminating programme differences and attracting incoming and outgoing students. This is very important for the implementation of the agreement and the success of the programme in the long term. Universities offering similar programme content are preferred. The number of double degree agreements should be considered, and further partnerships should be undertaken in accordance with the strategic action plan of the university

Face-to-face contacts with representatives of partner universities are important, both at the stage of pre-negotiations talks and during programme implementation. This facilitates the establishment of closer personal relationships, which reduces the time necessary to resolve unforeseen problems during the programme.

It is important that the formal requirements for student recruitment documents are precisely formulated in the agreement. It is also necessary to regularly review the programme offer of the partner university and to coordinate it with one's own programme changes. Clear and transparent recruitment and selection criteria for students in the double degree programme allow us to select ambitious, eager to develop, independent individuals who complete the programme.

There should be a constant and efficient flow of information between the staff involved in the preparation and implementation of double degree programmes (the Dean's Office, the International Cooperation Office, the Marketing Office, Deans, Vice-Deans, Heads of Studies, lecturers) in order to quickly resolve the problems of outgoing and incoming students when necessary.

It is useful to involve students who have experience in this programme to help promote the double degree. Short meetings on this topic should take place at a time when students are beginning to make decisions about their choice of study plan, including the choice of specialisation and student exchange. It is important to keep your own students fully and constantly informed – from the start of recruitment to the end of the exchange – in order to avoid misinterpretation of the rules at both partner universities. A precise timeline should also be created with key student commitments throughout the double degree process.

It would be good if the persons involved in the preparation and implementation of the double degree programmes had similar professional and personal competences, including experience, in order to avoid problems in the event of some unforeseen professional situations (e.g. illness, termination of employment contract).

It also seems necessary to have a common system with documentation and access to it for those involved in the preparation and implementation of double degree programmes, in order to accumulate and codify knowledge within the organisation. This serves the purpose of continuity of organisational knowledge in the event of changes of people in particular positions.

CEMS Master in International Management – a global programme for global challenges

GRZEGORZ M. AUGUSTYNIAK
Warsaw School of Economics
(SGH)

More than 30 years ago, on 2 December 1988, the founding act of the Community of European Management Schools (CEMS) was signed at the initiative of four major business schools: the HEC in Paris, Bocconi University in Milan, ESADE in Barcelona and the Faculty of Management at the University of Cologne. It resulted in the creation of a unique, one-year joint study programme conducted in English, based not only on the best practices of management education, but was also created in close cooperation with major international corporations. Unlike the booming MBA programmes of the time (to which CEMS was an alternative), these courses were aimed primarily at students with no professional experience, most often pursuing a Master's degree immediately after completing their undergraduate studies or studying as part of long-cycle studies (which was the standard at the time, if only in our part of the continent). Currently, such studies are referred to as pre-experience master's studies.

The initial mission of the CEMS programme was to set standards of excellence in management education, in collaboration with the aforementioned corporate

Deputy Director at the SGH Centre for International Cooperation and Academic Manager of the CEMS programme at the SGH; graduate of the Faculty of Foreign Trade at SGH; scholarship holder of the Canadian government and the Mellon Foundation (USA) – as part of the scholarships he held scientific internships at Carleton University (Ottawa), Calgary, the University of British Columbia in Vancouver and the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota; graduate of the summer school and teaching and management training at *Wirtschaftsuniversität* in Vienna, IESE in Barcelona and the Association of Overseas Technical Scholarship in Tokyo. Consultant in the implementation of productivity improvement programmes; he has lectured on logistics management and TQM as part of the Executive MBA programmes at SGH. He is currently a lecturer in postgraduate studies. Trainer in logistics management, total quality management and human capital management. Author of several domestic and foreign publications and translations in the aforementioned fields.



partners who have become part of the organisation as full members. Their participation ensured that a CEMS graduate gained the knowledge and experience to start his/her career earlier and gain rapid promotion, comparable to that achieved by graduates of leading MBA and Executive MBA programmes. The first partners recommended by CEMS founding universities were four entities: Credit Lyonnais, Procter & Gamble,

Dresdner Bank and KPMG. The structure of the programme ensured both the international and practical nature of the studies and was based on pillars that are still in place today, albeit in a much changed form and content. These pillars are:

- the obligation to study at least one semester at another partner university;
- expert knowledge of at least two foreign languages;
- implementation of a number of courses relating to international economic, management and financial issues;
- participation in a business project (advisory project);
- implementation of practical skills workshops (mainly soft skills);
- completion of an 8-week traineeship abroad.

The programme does not require the writing of a separate dissertation, as a prerequisite for completing the programme is the completion of studies at the student's home university and the successful completion of all required elements of the CEMS programme. Due to the different legal systems in each country, this programme can be a separate field of study or a pathway that runs parallel to a Master's degree at a particular university. This is one of the many elements of flexibility in the CEMS programme that have paved its way to globalisation in the past.

And speaking of globalisation: the initial idea was to include more selected European universities and global corporate partners in the programme. The principle of selecting universities was very simple: only one, best university from selected European countries, whose level of education, cooperation with business or traditions meet the high requirements of the association. In the mid-1990s, the first landmark decision was made to open CEMS to selected universities from post-communist countries, i.e. the Czech Republic (Prague School of Economics), Poland (SGH) and Hungary (today's Corvinus University - then known as the

Budapest University of Economic Sciences and Public Administration). A little later, in the 21st century, the business school of St. Petersburg State University joined the member universities. The total number of universities affiliated in CEMS has reached 20 (and the number of corporate partners has exceeded 50) and there are unlikely to be any plans for more universities from Europe to join the group. One important factor (apart from the obvious challenge of coordinating the programme with such a large number of entities) was the decision in 2007 to truly globalise the programme by including business schools from outside Europe. With the new strategy, CEMS also changed its name to the Global Alliance in Management Education, leaving the original acronym CEMS, which was already highly recognisable. This was followed by decisions to admit the first universities from outside Europe (Sydney, Singapore and Sao Paulo).

Today, the alliance has doubled the number of member universities (compared to that at the turn of the century) and exceeded 70 corporate and community partners. The presence of the latter is a reflection of another important change that is now being introduced in CEMS. This change, expressed in the new mission and vision of CEMS, is the focus of the programme's efforts on educating students and graduates who are not only prepared to work in a multicultural environment, but above all are distinguished by their sensitivity and social responsibility. In marketing messages, CEMS has begun to be promoted as a programme providing a symbolic passport to global citizenship in a world based on diversity and eliminating social exclusion.

The principles and values of the CEMS programme, although established before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, are not only still relevant, but also perfectly suited to the challenges facing the world after this and possibly a subsequent pandemic is overcome.

However, the CEMS programme is not only an ambitious mission and vision, but above all a huge challenge from an organisational (34 universities from all over the world with different educational systems and traditions and over 70 corporate and social partners – each with a specific organisational culture, representing very different industries and business objectives), educational (ensuring the highest quality and coherence of the programme in line with its principles and objectives) and logistical point of view. It is therefore worthwhile, if only in general terms, to explain the structure of the programme and the principles of alliance management.

The first step in achieving the objectives of the CEMS is the proper selection of candidates. During the recruitment process, in addition to having to demonstrate, among other things, adequate English language skills and good academic results, each applicant is assessed on the basis of a CEMS candidate profile, described in three categories:

- intellectual potential and knowledge – intellectual potential, academic excellence, knowledge in the business area;
- the candidate’s personality and soft skills – achievement drive, interpersonal skills, integrity, critical thinking, motivation for the CEMS MIM programme;
- international orientation – language skills, openness to the international environment and the ability to function in an intercultural environment.



CEMS – A WINDOW TO THE WORLD

ANNA FLIS

Warsaw School of Economics,
Higher School of Economics
in Prague (2018/2019)

I can sincerely say that the CEMS programme gave me much more than I expected. Amazing memories, everyone benefiting from each other, friends for life – and as for me a breakthrough internship abroad, which totally shaped my current career. This is how I would sum up my CEMSational experience. What is the most unique, the international network is huge – CEMSies are everywhere and they all consider themselves as a part of a great family.

Other aspects are also taken into account when selecting candidates, which creates equal opportunities for all candidates regardless of their financial situation, background, etc. Admission to the programme is associated with receiving an assignment for a compulsory semester abroad at one of the member universities.

The achievement of these objectives is reflected in the programme structure shown in the table below.

A qualified student, depending on the educational model (as a study path or a separate course), completes a year of study according to CEMS rules. The prerequisite for the CEMS degree is a degree from the home university and at least 8 weeks of international traineeship. To ensure programme consistency with such a wide variety of universities, a number of flexibilities and rules

are built into the CEMS MIM programme to allow students and universities to embed CEMS into their local structure.

When a student has successfully completed all stages and elements of the programme, s/he can collect the CEMS degree, which is ceremoniously awarded at the graduation ceremony during the CEMS Annual Assembly (Annual Events). Graduation is increasingly accompanied by a local ceremony at the graduate's home university. In the vast majority of universities, there is no separate tuition fee for participation in the programme, which facilitates

the assumption of equal access to the programme regardless of financial status. This is possible because the programme is financed through annual membership fees paid by universities (€10,000) and corporate partners (€25,000).

One of the most important features of the CEMS MIM programme is the high quality of the teaching offer and the ability to pursue an international professional career. This quality starts at the stage of selection of the alliance members and ends with a rather complex process of evaluation of the level of teaching and service (delivered by students)

TABLE 5. Framework programme for the one-year CEMS MIM Master's programme at SGH

One-year CEMS MIM Master's programme								
August - January Semester 1, university 1		February - July Semester 2, university 2			Semester 3, international traineeship			
3 ECTS		30 ECTS		1 ECTS	15 ECTS	15 ECTS		
at least 8 weeks		at least 8 weeks		at least 8 weeks		at least 8 weeks		
Recruitment November-January of the previous academic year	Weekly block seminar (3 ECTS)		Global strategy and other CEMS subjects		Global citizenship (block seminar)	Global Leadership and other CEMS subjects	Business project (Business Project)	Obtaining the SGH degree and completing all elements of the programme in six months to one and a half years after the end of the programme
	Seminars of practical skills (Skill Seminars) 2 ECTS						Traineeship abroad (or domestic if both semesters are abroad) Outside the teaching period, before, during or after the end of the study year	
	Completion of any overdue subjects or completion of subjects before the start of the programme							
	min. 24-max. 37.5 ECTS		min. 24-max. 37.5 ECTS				up to 15 ECTS	
Obtaining min. 5 ECTS in subjects developing "hard skills" (e.g. quantitative methods) realised within 45 ECTS for CEMS subjects							CEMS MIM degree	
Accredited examinations or courses in a second foreign language (Language assessment)								

Source: own study based on <http://www.cems.org>

and periodic peer review and continuous exchange of best practices.

It is worth mentioning that in the 2016/2017 academic year, SGH was awarded the University of the Year award in CEMS based on the aforementioned student evaluation surveys. Considering the reputation and resources of most partner universities, this is a great achievement and proves that the system of experience exchange has a positive impact on raising and levelling the education level within the alliance.

In conclusion, the CEMS programme has several characteristics that distinguish it from other double or joint degree programmes:

- an international character based on diversity;
- more than 1,200 students representing 72 nationalities;
- more than 14,000 graduates representing 108 nationalities and working in 75 countries;
- 100% of programme recommendations by graduates;
- 97% of graduates are employed or continue education;
- 91% work or have worked in two or more countries of the world;
- 75% work for international corporations;
- 51% worked or work with CEMS corporate or social partners;
- 49% work abroad.

The fate of the graduates from the point of view of the sectors in which they are employed is also very diverse:

- 21% work in consultancy firms;
- 14% are employed in the financial sector;
- 14% work in production companies;
- the others are employed in a number of other industries or have established their own company.

The most frequently held positions are: consultant – 23%, marketing department employee – 13%, management positions – 13%. This high employability of the programme's graduates is also the result

of the inclusion of companies in the training process and the organisation of job fairs (CEMS Career Forum) or other events in which corporate and social partners play an important role.

The above figures also perfectly describe the CEMS programme, its mission and vision. Thanks to its reputation (top ten rankings in the *Financial Times*, *The Economist*, *QS Ranking*), it is becoming a benchmark for socially responsible education for many organisations and universities. We are proud that such a programme is also available in Poland (we already have nearly 750 graduates), and we hope that the group of candidates for the CEMS MIM programme at SGH will grow significantly. It really is worth taking advantage of this opportunity.



CEMS - A WINDOW TO THE WORLD

TOM ZACHARSKI

Warsaw School of Economics, Corvinus University of Budapest (2008/2009)

The CEMS programme was an excellent complement to my studies at SGH, as it gave me a unique perspective of international business practices and, above all, how to work effectively with people from abroad. This has not only helped me address international business issues effectively, but has also allowed me to be more creative and flexible in my work. Plus it was a lot of fun – I have stayed in touch with many of the people I met during the programme, and we are still friends.

Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA) - an international humanitarian aid training network

PATRYCJA GRZEBYK,
PHD, DSC, PROF. UW
University of Warsaw

The Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA) is a network of 10 European universities providing quality education in humanitarian studies with the aim of professionalising the humanitarian sector and collaborating with a group of non-European universities from all continents in this field. Due to the complexity of the modern world, both in terms of social relations and international relations, humanitarian aid is not based - as in the past - on the goodwill of adventurous enthusiasts, but is provided by humanitarian workers trained in this field, who understand the anthropological, geopolitical, health and legal conditions of humanitarian aid and who are able to prepare projects and manage humanitarian aid.

Director of the Network on Humanitarian Action at the University of Warsaw, she specialises in international law. Author of numerous publications, including monographs: *Cele osobowe i rzeczowe w konfliktach zbrojnych w świetle prawa międzynarodowego* [Personal and material goals in armed conflicts in the light of international law], WN Scholar, 2018; *Criminal Responsibility for the Crime of Aggression*, Routledge, 2013. Together with Elżbieta Mikos-Skuza, PhD, editor of *Pomoc humanitarna w świetle prawa i praktyki* [Humanitarian aid in the light of law and practice], WN Scholar, 2016. Laureate, e.g. of the Manfred Lachs Award and scholarships of the Foundation for Polish Science, Ministry of Science and Higher Education and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Currently ,NCN grant manager: *Effectiveness of requests for advisory opinions from the International Court of Justice and of advisory opinions in international relations (2021-2024)*. She has taught at the universities of Barcelona, Bologna, Cambridge, Geneva, Kiev, Madrid, Munich, Beijing, Taiwan, Zagreb. More information: <https://uw.academia.edu/PatrycjaGrzebyk>.



There are several universities in the world running such studies independently. NOHA is the only university network, which is important considering the multi-disciplinarity of these studies and the variety of competences a student should acquire, and thus the special value of joint studies.

ELŻBIETA MIKOS-SKUZA, PHD
University of Warsaw

Assistant professor at the Faculty of Law and Administration of the University of Warsaw and visiting professor at the College of Europe in Natolin. She specialises in public international law, particularly international humanitarian law of armed conflict. Head of the Master's studies in Humanitarian Action in English, conducted within the university consortium Network on Humanitarian Action, and postgraduate studies in Humanitarian Aid in Polish at the University of Warsaw. She has been a volunteer with the Polish Red Cross for several decades, including serving as vice president of the Polish Red Cross. She is also vice president of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission, established under one of the international agreements for the protection of victims of armed conflict and investigating allegations of war crimes, and a full member of the International Humanitarian Law Institute in San Remo. She publishes in English and Polish. She has lectured in: Aix-en-Provence, Belgrade, Bratislava, Bruges, Brussels, Budapest, Yerevan, Giessen, The Hague, Ljubljana, Luxembourg, L'viv, Moscow, Rovaniemi, San Remo and Vilnius.



NOHA was established in 1993 at the initiative of five European universities, which prepared a joint programme of studies: *Université catholique de Louvain* from Belgium, *Universidad de Deusto* from Spain, *Aix-en-Provence Université* (now *Aix-Marseille Université*) from France, *Ruhr-Universität Bochum* from Germany and University of Oxford from the UK. The composition of NOHA has changed over time. It currently includes (in chronological order): *Université catholique de Louvain* from Belgium, *Universidad de Deusto* from Spain, *Aix-Marseille Université* from France, *Ruhr-Universität Bochum* from Germany, University College Dublin from Ireland, *Uppsala Universitet* from Sweden, *Rijksuniversiteit Groningen* from the Netherlands, University of Warsaw from Poland, *Vilniaus Universitetas* from Lithuania and *L-Università ta' Malta* from Malta.

Soon after its creation, NOHA received the support of the European Union (then EEC), especially the European Commission and its Directorates-General for Humanitarian Aid (now: Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection), abbreviated to DG ECHO,

and for Education and Culture, abbreviated to DG EAC. The new programme was of particular relevance to the former institution, DG ECHO, which was created a year earlier than NOHA (in 1992) in the context of the Balkan conflict of the first half of the 1990s and immediately experienced the negative consequences of a lack of personnel trained in the professional delivery of humanitarian aid. Support from DG ECHO was provided for 25 years and consisted of financial grants to NOHA, hosting NOHA students for traineeships and graduates for jobs.

NOHA's main achievement remains the joint Master's programme in Humanitarian Action which has been implemented and modified several times since 1994 and currently involves, on the basis of the 2017 consortium agreement, eight NOHA universities, i.e. all except *Université catholique de Louvain* from Belgium and *Vilniaus Universitetas* from Lithuania.

It is a two-year programme, conducted in English, providing for significant mobility of students and, to a lesser extent, academics. It starts with an intensive programme organised at the University of Warsaw for all newly admitted NOHA students in September each year. In the first semester, the programme which is identical at each member university of the consortium, the student attends classes at the university chosen as his/her home university. In the second semester, s/he studies at another NOHA university chosen as a host university due to its thematic specialisation (e.g. UW specialises in humanitarian aid in armed conflict). In the third semester, the student travels outside Europe to learn about the regional specificities of humanitarian aid provision at one of the partner universities (e.g. *Universidad Javeriana* from Colombia, *Universitas Gadjah Mada* from Indonesia, *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* from Lebanon, Fordham University from the USA) or at one of the humanitarian organisations working in the region. The above decisions depend on whether the student chooses an academic pathway or a vocational pathway in the third semester. The fourth semester is dedicated to writing the thesis, often in combination with optional work placements.

NOHA students have a strong influence on the implementation of the NOHA programme through an extensive survey system and their representation on the Joint Programme Committee, which reviews and evaluates the various elements of the programme on an ongoing basis. Graduates are active in NOHA as part of the Alumni Community.

The NOHA joint Master's degree programme has been granted by the European Commission the status of: Erasmus Mundus Programme (in 2004), Erasmus Mundus Partnerships Programme (in 2005), Socrates II Programme (in 2006), Erasmus Mundus Master Course under the new Erasmus Mundus II Programme (2009-2015), Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree (2018-2020 and 2020-2023).

In addition to the joint Master's degree programme, NOHA organises and co-organises numerous thematic schools and seminars, undergraduate classes, and publishes the *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*. NOHA has been involved in European projects, such as the European Universities on Professionalization on Humanitarian Action (EUPRHA), the European Humanitarian Partnership (EUHAP) or the establishment of the European Humanitarian Volunteer Corps, and worldwide projects, such as the World Humanitarian Summit under the auspices of the UN.

The University of Warsaw (UW) was admitted to NOHA in 2008, although for formal reasons it could not participate in the joint Master's programme at that time. The UW was responsible for organising the intensive NOHA programme and co-organised numerous other NOHA events. Formally, the UW joined this platform of cooperation in the academic year 2015/2016 by organising an interdisciplinary English-language second-cycle programme in *Humanitarian Action*, with a general academic profile. They are conducted jointly by the Faculty of Law and Administration of the University of Warsaw and the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies of the University of Warsaw on the basis of an agreement concluded in 2014. They are perfectly in line with the activity strategies of both faculties and the Strategy of the University of Warsaw, in particular with regard to the postulate on conducting interdisciplinary studies and research, the internationalisation of

studies, enriching the educational offer for foreign students, increasing student mobility and the practical application of practised scientific fields.

There are a number of challenges involved in running a Humanitarian Action degree programme, the graduates of which (as is intended) should receive a Joint Master's Degree in Humanitarian Action (rather than just a Joint Degree).

The study programme is multidisciplinary, which means that from the very beginning people from different university departments had to be involved in creating the course, and not only because, for example, the module on public health required cooperation with lecturers from the Warsaw Medical University or external experts. The scale of the arrangements between different university units increases the amount of work that needs to be put into the functioning of the studies. In addition, representatives of the University of Warsaw must systematically participate in meetings of various types of NOHA consortium bodies (mainly the Board of Directors). When a crisis arises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings on the situation at NOHA universities are held weekly and last for several hours at a time, and the decisions made require consideration of national and even regional regulations of all the countries where NOHA universities operate. Also, organising joint programme components such as an intensive programme or joint simulation exercises is a major logistical challenge, as such events involve around 150 students and around 50-70 academic staff. The programme of such events has to be accepted by all partner universities, and the selection of lecturers has to take into account the needs of students and, among other things, criticism of the too - European approach to the issue of humanitarian aid.

International cooperation involves the need to take into account different organisational cultures or communication problems (what for one university is already a binding decision to be implemented, for another university is only a proposal to be discussed with other representatives of its own university). Where there is a will to conduct a course together, any disputes must be resolved amicably with the aim of finding a way out, rather than analysing the cause of the problem, which may simply be human error. There is no doubt that cooperation is possible if a competent person, who is ready to get involved, is identified at a partner university. The key to success is therefore not in choosing the right university, but in identifying the people who will be responsible for collaboration at a particular university.

Good collaboration is essential from the first stage of studies of a particular group of students, that is, recruitment. Receiving support from the European Commission in the form of funding for scholarships for a certain number of applicants from designated regions requires negotiations on how to distribute these scholarships in order not only to accept the best applicants, but also to distribute the scholarship holders evenly among the universities. In some years, there is a lack of good candidates from specific regions of the world. Then it is necessary to plan an appropriate campaign to advertise studies in that region in order to be able to fulfil the conditions set forth by the EC.

Studies, which are intended to attract candidates from all over the world, require cooperation with consular services in many countries. Unfortunately, visa procedures sometimes take months, and it is not uncommon for a candidate who has gained the approval of the entire consortium not to be granted a visa for reasons we do not understand – in such a case, the scholarship place is lost, which is unfair to other potential students. The requirement to present an apostille on diplomas or documents confirming the possibility of studying at the master's level on the basis of a given diploma is a deterrent for candidates at the University of Warsaw, when such a requirement does not exist at other partner universities. There is a list of universities from all over the world whose diplomas are recognised without additional procedures. The requirement to provide relevant documents legalising the diplomas of first-cycle studies is enforced both from students for whom the University of Warsaw is their home university and from those for whom we are the host university. It is not uncommon for students to express frustration as to why the UW is demanding additional documents from them when their home university has already verified the admission requirements (including relevant education).

In the case of NOHA studies at the UW, an additional challenge is the fact that the persons admitted come from different regions of the world (usually there are no Poles in the studies, which is mainly due to their high cost). Thus, the university must attach particular importance to the fight against all kinds of discrimination, and must make its students aware of the problems they may encounter once they arrive in Poland. We are proud to note, however, that our students are in demand as interns at, for example, the Polish Humanitarian Action and often take part in ceremonies celebrating Poland's national holidays.

Coordination of the quality of education is a major challenge. Students communicate well with each other, exchange experiences and any imperfections in the programme at a particular university are widely commented on. Students argue that, since they pay the same tuition, they want to receive comparable quality services. Therefore, at NOHA there are continuous efforts to monitor the quality of education, guidelines for course syllabuses are developed; lecturers exchange experiences and participate in training.

The challenge was, and still is, the introduction of a joint degree. As part of NOHA, most universities have agreed to delegate to Bochum University the competence to issue diplomas on behalf of NOHA universities. However, due to national requirements, such a diploma must be signed by representatives of certain universities (Bochum, Groningen, Malta, Deusto) or registered with the respective Ministry of Higher Education. This means that the procedure for issuing the diploma (if we take into account the time needed for registration, signatures, courier mail, which during the pandemic is additionally quarantined – often twice: in the country where the mail is sent and in the country to which the mail is addressed) takes between 9 and 12 months. Perhaps surprisingly, such a waiting period

for a joint degree is assessed to be relatively short, but it is completely at odds with the Polish statutory requirements requiring the degree to be issued within 30 days (Article 77 (2) of the Act of 20 July 2018 *Law on Higher Education and Science*, Journal of Laws, item 1668).

The Polish legislator has provided for the possibility of issuing a higher education diploma by a foreign university, which is why the University of Warsaw was able to enter the procedure for issuing a joint degree without any problems. Unfortunately, not all EU countries are prepared for this. For example, the universities of Uppsala and Dublin could not – due to national constraints (the requirement to issue the degree in the territory of Sweden or Ireland respectively) – follow this procedure, which meant that separate agreements had to be concluded for the issuing of joint or double degrees. It is characteristic that also in the case of the University of Warsaw, while a specimen of a diploma of joint studies has been developed, no specimen of a joint degree has been prepared (the situation is similar at other Polish universities, which is partly due to a lack of understanding of the differences between the two types of degrees).

In the case of Humanitarian Action studies, it is necessary to enter all data into the internal University Student Support System, not only for students who have chosen UW as their home university, but also for students who have chosen the UW as their host university. There are therefore considerable problems when other universities do not provide transcripts of grades, or argue the need for data protection and the inability to provide the relevant documents. Information about students' defences at other universities is transmitted with a delay, and then the UW has a problem with a timely completion of data in the POL-on system. In addition, in the Polish system, we should enter the date of the defence, the thesis grade, the thesis defence grade – while in

many countries there is no separate defence grade and the idea of a thesis defence itself does not exist. Problems also arise with the correct conversion of grades from one system to another and the different rules for calculating the average, which determines the final grade on the diploma.

Undoubtedly, joint studies, especially those leading to a joint degree, require increased bureaucracy. It should also be taken into account that each partner university is going through an accreditation process and support from the other universities in the consortium is necessary. In the case of cooperation with the European Commission, reporting obligations are also very burdensome and failure to comply with them entails considerable financial losses.

In spite of these difficulties, conducting studies within NOHA brings a lot of satisfaction. Students mostly appreciate the quality of these studies, which is evidenced, among other things, by the positive comments made in evaluation surveys, e.g.:

The overall coursework was manageable and very enriching. A great source of motivation were the educational trips to Geneva, Berlin and Auschwitz that really complemented what we were learning in the classroom. The overall approach of the UW is really appreciated.

The bonding fostering activities were very much appreciated. The workload was appropriate. With regards to COVID issues, it was a bit hard for students that they were not encouraged to return to their home countries. Nevertheless, coordinators were very supportive and the switch to online was very fast.

International engineering education programme in the T.I.M.E. network.

EWA MROCZEK

Wrocław University
of Science and Technology

Top Industrial Managers in Engineering (T.I.M.E.) is at the same time a programme of bi-cultural engineering education completed with degrees from two partner universities, and a network of major technical universities established in Paris in 1989 and actively growing. The initiators of the network were a group of 16 universities from 10 European countries, and today the network consists of 57 universities from 25 countries in the world. Members of the T.I.M.E. network are institutions with strong research and educational backgrounds, established links with industry and committed to international cooperation.

The guiding idea behind the creation of the T.I.M.E. network was the firm conviction that a Master's degree programme run by two partner universities, combined with full integration of students at the host university, language learning and gaining professional qualifications in another country is the best way to train engineers for the international labour market. This opinion is obvious today, but at the end of the 1980s it seemed quite ground-breaking. The ground on which it is possible to build a study programme leading to the so-called double

Graduate of Romance philology and post-graduate studies EU Structural Funds at the University of Wrocław, Public relations in practice at Kozminski University and the Executive MBA programme at the Polish-American Business School of the Wrocław University of Science and Technology. From 2009, professionally associated with the Wrocław University of Science and Technology, including since 2011 as the coordinator of the double degree programme T.I.M.E. and joint studies projects. From 2017, she has been in charge of the Recruitment and Support of International Students Section in the International Cooperation Department, where she deals, among other things, with the recruitment of scholarship holders of NAWA and Visegrad Fund programmes. Chair of the IROs Forum in 2014, she initiated the Polish-Brazilian cooperation between the IROs Forum networks and the Network of International Offices of Rio de Janeiro Higher Education Institutions REARI-RJ. Author of the article *Summer Schools – a way to internationalise universities* in the publication *Time of internationalisation II. Perspectives, priorities, projects* ed. by Dr Bianka Siwińska and Prof. Grzegorz Mazurek, in *Perspektywy*, 2017. Conference speaker, including: "Double degrees as a pillar of international strategic partnerships" (Lodz University of Technology, 2018), "Foreign students in Poland" (UAM, 2014) and "Intercultural competences in language education" (FRSE, Warsaw 2014).



degree is the close cooperation of universities and the involvement of academic and administrative staff in two countries, which is necessary to define a common educational pathway while respecting the differences and local specifics resulting from different organisation of studies and legal regulations. Students who complete part of their studies at a partner university, thanks to the signed agreements and agreed study programmes, obtain two degrees: that of the home university and that of the partner university. The double degree programme provides for the possibility of extending studies by one year without incurring the costs of tuition fees. The partner university is required to issue a degree at the home university and the student obtains two degrees after fulfilling the requirements of both universities. The double diploma programme requires a lot of commitment from students, good self-organisation and is a kind of investment for the future, but in the end it offers much better opportunities to receive a good education, an interesting and well-paid job and career development.

Since the establishment of the T.I.M.E. network, more than 5,000 students have completed the double degree programme with over 300 signed agreements and gained employment opportunities in the global labour market. Their international careers are very often impressive thanks to their degrees from two renowned universities. Alumni of the programme are members of the T.I.M.E. Alumni Association, which works to promote this form of education among students through presentations of their own experiences and tutoring.

The cooperation of universities within the network enables, apart from the realisation of double degree programmes, to get to know various educational systems in the world, aiming at realisation of joint doctorates, exchange of good practices in the implementation of joint projects and finding reliable partners for creating consortiums

applying for funding from EU programmes, such as Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree, Horizon Europe, Strategic Partnership. The network is also a partner in projects carried out by consortia involving at least one member university, such as the Erasmus Mundus Chemical Nanoengineering (CNE) joint degree project. More information on current projects can be found at: <https://timeassociation.org/eu-projects/>.

An interesting proposal of the network is the TESS (T.I.M.E. European Summer School), organised every year, which offers an in-depth understanding of the relationship between sustainable development and economic conditions on a global scale and encourages participants to solve real problems of the contemporary world, such as escaping poverty through sustainable development. The courses are implemented using the Project Based Learning methodology. Two Polish member universities of the T.I.M.E. network. – Wrocław University of Science and Technology and AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow – together with France's *École Centrale Marseille* and Germany's *RWTH Aachen* have received approval for a joint project and funding to organise a 4 T.I.M.E. TECH summer school made available remotely in July 2021. The summer school enabled students to work in an international group under the guidance of foreign lecturers, and will promote the offer of each university and encourage students to take part in the double degree programme.

The current list of T.I.M.E. member universities can be found at: <https://timeassociation.org/time-members/>.

Forest Information Technology

- modern technologies in forestry

ARKADIUSZ GRUCHAŁA, PHD, BENG
Warsaw University
of Life Sciences

Forest Information Technology (FIT) is a specialisation offered in English at the second level of full-time studies in forestry. FIT is a joint project of the Faculty of Forestry of SGGW and the Faculty of Forest and Environment of the University of Sustainable Development in Eberswalde, Germany (*Fachbereich für Wald und Umwelt, Hochschule für nachhaltige Entwicklung Eberswalde*) The specialisation began in 2005, when a joint study agreement was signed on 15 June during the 175th anniversary of forestry science and education in Eberswalde.

It should be added that on the Polish side, the specialisation is accredited by the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA), while on the German side, the FIT specialisation is accredited by the German *Akkreditierungsagentur für Studiengänge der Ingenieurwissenschaften, Informatik, Naturwissenschaften und Mathematik* (ASIIN), i.e. the Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in Engineering, Computer Science, Natural Sciences and Mathematics. It is a non-profit association that remains a leader nationally (Germany) and internationally in the accreditation of programmes in engineering, life sciences, mathematics, computer science and medicine and economics.

Graduate of the Faculty of Forestry at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW) (forestry faculty). He wrote his diploma thesis in the field of public goods analysis in forestry, and his doctoral thesis on human resources management at the Faculty of Forestry of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences. Since 2001, professionally associated with the Faculty of Forestry of SGGW (now with the Institute of Forest Sciences of the SGGW). He has performed a number of functions, including: Vice-Dean for didactics (currently 3rd term), Head of the Department of Forestry Economics (currently 2nd term), Rector's plenipotentiary for educational quality, Dean's plenipotentiary for educational quality and cooperation with employers. Member of the Rector and Senate Committee of SGGW, including the teaching, international cooperation, incentive pay and staff development committees. Head of research projects financed by the State Forest Enterprise (*Państwowe Gospodarstwo Leśne - Lasy Państwowe*) in the field of constructing job profiles of managerial staff, defining career paths or working time analysis. Member of international research teams in POL-EDDA, FORMIT, TECH4EFFECT programmes. Faculty coordinator of NCBiR - POWER programmes concerning the development of additional competences and professional internships of students and visiting professors. Initiator of student exchanges – annually (for 10 years) between the Faculty of Forestry of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences and the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology at the Czech Agricultural University in Prague (*Česká zemědělská univerzita v Praze, ČZU*) Speaker at domestic and foreign scientific conferences, including, inter alia, the World ICUFRO Congress in Freiburg (2017).



KAROL BRONISZ, PHD, BENG
Warsaw University
of Life Sciences

Graduate of the Faculty of Forestry at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW) (forestry faculty). He wrote his thesis on dendrometry (on how to determine tree volume). He received his PhD from the Faculty of Forestry, SGGW, in the field of tree and stand growth modelling. Since 2012, professionally associated with the Faculty of Forestry of SGGW (now with the Institute of Forest Sciences of the SGGW). He has acted as coordinator for the Forest Information Technology specialisation at the Faculty of Forestry at SGGW and as a member of the Rector's and SGGW Senate committees on international cooperation. Head of the research project financed by the National Science Centre on tree growth in relation to climate change.

Member of international research teams and coordinator of specific tasks in programmes: FORMIT (7. Framework Programme) and TECH4EFFECT (Horizon 2020). Speaker at domestic and international scientific conferences, including the IUFRO World Congress (Germany, Freiburg, 2017) or the joint conference organised by Southern and Northeastern Mensurationists and IUFRO at Virginia Tech (USA, Blacksburg, 2018). Participant of internships abroad, including at the University of Eastern Finland (Finland, Joensuu, 2019).



ASIIN is supported by an alliance including universities, faculty associations, technical and scientific societies, professional bodies and business associations who are collectively committed to quality development in higher education. The ASIIN Industry Advisory Board supports the formulation of professional practice requirements for modern higher education.

The need for this specialisation was dictated by a number of factors. The most important of these include:

- the development necessity of developing new educational programmes in a foreign language, including the possibility of using its elements in the modifications of the Polish-language study programme;
- the possibility of extending the competence of graduates, with particular regard to global circumstances;
- opening up new labour markets, including those not directly linked to the forestry sector, and facilitating the entry of graduates into careers in the scientific field.

In characterising the FIT programme, attention should be drawn to the concept of dividing the learning modules into three problem categories. Firstly, there is the “forest” category, which includes learning modules related to traditionally identified forest management activities. This includes modules such as sustainable forestry or forest biometry, biomass and tree-ring analysis. Secondly, the “information” category, which includes modules with strong links to information technology or new IT solutions. Here, in turn, you can mention, among other things, data processing and programming or approaches and tools for research and monitoring with geodata and remote sensing. The last category of “technology” includes, inter alia, training modules such as Digital Processing of Remotely Sensed Data or Forest inventory and modelling, which concern the use of modern technologies. By making a different division in the programme in question, one can find compulsory and optional subjects.

Classes are held exclusively in English. The main forms of teaching are lectures, practical classes and fieldwork. Distance learning tools have been used in teaching at FIT since the very beginning. Studies carried out with an external partner, due to their nature, timing and organisation naturally tend to use online tools. In particular, the Moodle platform (currently also the Teams platform) is used via e-SGGW (<https://e.sggw.pl/>). At the same time, none of the typical learning modules is delivered entirely online.

The period of studies covers 2 years (4 semesters), which is one semester more than for Polish-language second-cycle studies in this field. The first semester obligatorily takes place in Eberswalde, the second in Warsaw. Students spend the following semester(s) at the place they choose to write their thesis (Master's thesis). The chronology of the classes presented requires double recruitment. Recruitment takes place both in Germany and in Poland (two recruitment systems), in the same semester (summer) of the academic year preceding the beginning of the next study cycle, which always begins in October (winter semester). However, recruitment in Germany is slightly earlier (usually ends at the end of May/beginning of June), which is necessitated by the fact that candidates have to fulfil visa formalities. Most FIT students are non-EU students and formalities take a longer time. Only students recruited in the German system can start recruitment in the Polish system – recruitment in Poland usually takes place at the end of June/beginning of July. The specialisation is open to anyone with a bachelor's or engineering degree in forestry or related fields (spatial management, environmental protection, geography, information and information technology, etc.) who wishes to learn about the use of modern technologies to solve problems related to forestry and the broadly understood natural environment. At the same time, students must demonstrate at least a good knowledge of

The organisation of the FIT student's training process also enables the simultaneous formation of technical, organisational and social competences.

English. The study programme comprises a total of 120 ECTS credits.

The programme ends with a diploma thesis and a diploma examination. Irrespective of the country in which the thesis was written and the country where the diploma examination took place, graduates receive Master's degrees from both universities/departments.

The design of the FIT study programme differs from traditional systems and allows for a stronger causal link between both the individual learning modules and their content. This organisation of the FIT student's training process also enables the simultaneous formation of technical, organisational and social competences. At the same time, particular emphasis is placed on the formation of competences, decision-making skills, which should enable graduates to occupy managerial positions both in the area of broadly understood forestry and environmental protection, nature conservation, etc. at the local, national and international levels.

Additionally, a good practice, also related to the organisation of studies and the need for students to adapt to Polish conditions, is the organisation of Orientation Days. This takes place prior to the start of their studies in Poland and is carried out on two levels: university-wide, where issues such as health and safety training, library training, health care, etc. are discussed, as well as issues relating to living in Warsaw (in cooperation with representatives of the city hall); and departmental, concerning such issues as teaching staff, study regulations, documentation of the course of studies, timetable of classes, important dates, infrastructure used (including information about the Forest Experimental Station and how field classes are conducted) or accommodation.

It is also worth noting that the innovative character of studies at the FIT specialisation is revealed at least on several levels. One aspect of this is the joint running of studies by two different entities, and from different countries. This was an exceptional situation in 2005, and it is not a frequent situation at present either. In the area of forestry in our country, we do not find any other such case. In addition, the above-mentioned arrangement/problem-based division of the learning modules and the applied methods and learning tools using advanced techniques, software, technologies, technical equipment are unique. These include: drones, terrestrial and airborne laser scanning, satellite imagery or survey kits (Field-Map). Another important aspect is the attractive content of the various training modules. This attractiveness is recognised by candidates for the studies, who are extremely different – they come from different countries in the world. So far, students from more than 20 countries have participated in the study programme (currently in the Warsaw semester we have students from 15 countries). In addition to students from Poland and Germany, we host students from China, the United States, the United Kingdom, India,

Bangladesh, Nigeria, Morocco, Iran, Syria and others. The international context of the study programme content also translates into graduates finding their way in the international labour market. It is also important that the student can choose where to complete as many as two semesters of study (at one or the other university).

In the context of both the challenges and innovations of the FIT specialisation, it is worth mentioning the open and flexible form of some of the modules. An example is the Research Project training module, which requires a student to carry out an individual research project in cooperation with various research institutions in the world or specialisation partners. A research project carried out within this module may be an initial element of the thesis (although not necessarily). It is carried out under the supervision of a tutor (who may in the future be the thesis supervisor). The tutor determines the form of completing the module. This is most often a publicly presented study report (a form similar to a diploma examination). Another example is a special module changing its content and character depending on the needs expressed by the students, external stakeholders, academic teachers or due to the circumstances, events related to the country of implementation of a given semester, e.g. natural disasters or new technologies.

Lodz University of Technology and its many years of experience in implementing double degree agreements

ADRIANNA KOZŁOWSKA

Lodz University
of Technology

Graduate of English Philology at the University of Lodz and the prestigious Master of Business Administration from the Lodz University of Technology and Illinois State University. Since 2001, professionally associated with the Lodz University of Technology, where she realises her ambitions as an academic teacher and is an employee of the central administration. In 2019, she took up the position of Director of the Centre for Education at the Lodz University of Technology, responsible for coordinating all matters related to the process of higher and postgraduate education. She is constantly looking for new challenges by engaging in national and international projects. She has been actively involved in the development of innovative education methods for several years, author of many training programmes and trainer, attending numerous conferences, seminars, as well as workshops on higher education.



DOROTA PIOTROWSKA, PHD, BENG, PROF. PŁ

Lodz University of Technology

The biographical note can be found
in the Introduction on page 11.

The Lodz University of Technology signed its first double degree agreements in 2004 with French universities – *École Centrale de Lyon* and *École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts et Métiers* (*École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts et Métiers*) – based on an agreement on intensive student exchange concluded in 2001. At that time, the provision of study programmes was based on the

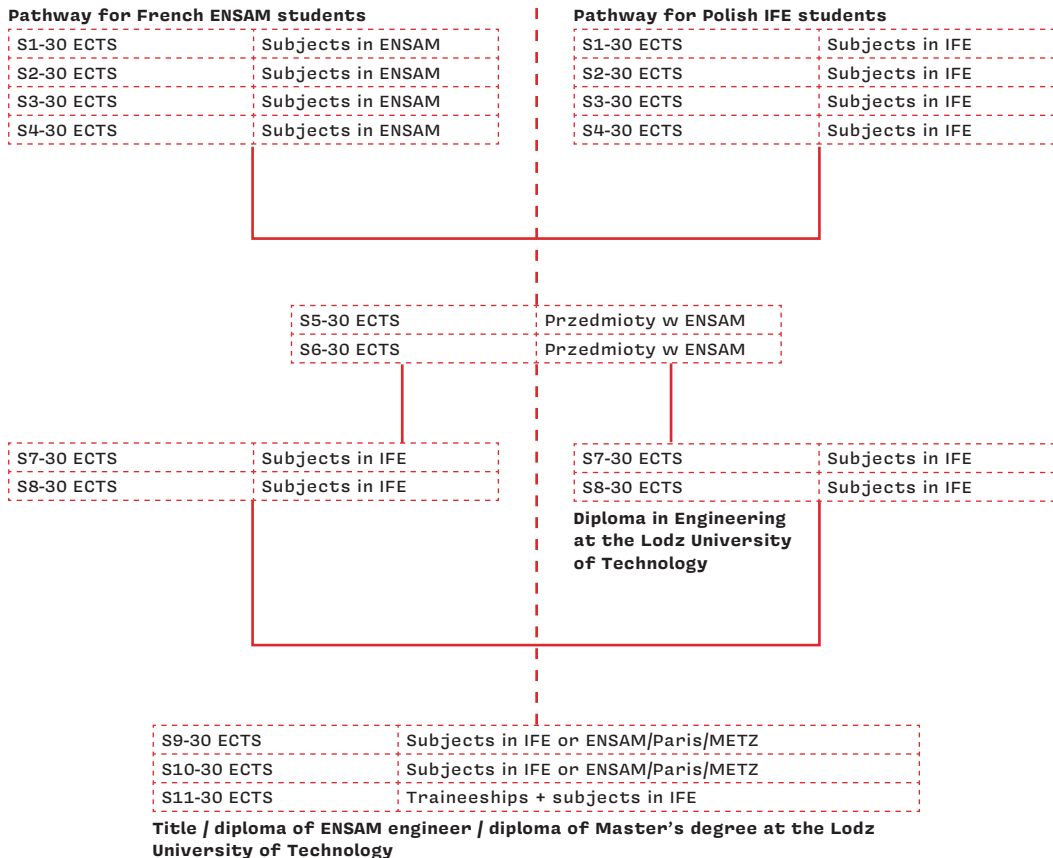
so-called educational standards described in great detail in the *Regulation of the competent Minister of Science and Higher Education on educational standards for individual fields and levels of education, as well as on the mode of establishment and the conditions to be met by a higher education institution in order to provide studies.*

It should be emphasised that since the entry into force of a system based on learning outcomes and the introduction of the Qualifications Framework, the Lodz University of Technology, in the vast majority of cases, bases its double degree agreements on the system of awarding double qualifications consisting in the recognition of learning outcomes acquired at a partner university. The word “degree” is closely related to the word “qualification” as defined in the 2008 European Qualifications Framework, where a qualification means “the formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes in accordance with given standards”. The programme autonomy of universities, implemented by a new law in 2011, allowed for independent definition of standards and study programmes, which only had to refer to learning outcomes – descriptors in the Polish Qualifications Framework. This has allowed a wider openness to the diversity of teaching offered by foreign partners.

For several years it has been a relatively straightforward process to sign double degree agreements with universities and countries that have adopted the Bologna system of two-cycle studies, such as the UK, the Netherlands or Germany. The negotiations largely consisted in comparing the substantive content of individual programmes. However, there were no major problems in recruiting students for the various degree programmes, as the time ranges of first- and second-cycle studies in European countries largely coincided. However, not with all countries/systems was this comparison of qualifications so uncomplicated.

The most actively cooperating strategic country is France, with which the university has signed over 50 bilateral agreements. Another 13 have been developed into double degree agreements. However, it should be stressed that the signing of agreements with French universities has also become a kind of challenge. There was a need to reconcile the Polish higher education system with the French system, which did not accept the Bologna model. Awarding qualifications on both sides involved not only comparing the content of the different programmes, but also the need to sort out the levels from which the students benefiting from the agreement were recruited. The figure below illustrates one of the first exchange schemes between Polish and French students. In order to comply with the education standards in force at the time, French students were forced to complete as many as two years of studies at the PŁ. Some of the subjects defined in the educational standards were implemented during preparatory classes, the programme of which also had to be subjected to a thorough analysis on the part of the PŁ.

At present, thanks to the implementation of the qualifications framework and the departure from rigid educational standards, it has been possible to significantly simplify the exchange scheme and sign a double degree agreement covering only level VII of the European Qualifications Framework, which in the Polish system is associated with the award of a Master’s degree, while in France it is equivalent to the award of an engineer’s degree. The title of engineer in France unfortunately involves meeting a number of very strict requirements formulated by the *Commission des titres d’ingénieur* (CTI). According to the accreditation criteria adopted in 2017, foreign students covered by double degree agreements are obliged to obtain 120 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in French *grandes écoles*¹⁰¹.



Source: study by Dorota Piotrowska (PL), Jean Quesada (ENSAM Cluny) – negotiating documents for double degree agreements - Łódź/Paris 2010

The programme carried out by the students is subject to an agreement between the universities, but the French side is very strict about the process of qualitatively documenting all the engineering competences enshrined in the CTI standard, with one year of compulsory mobility for first-cycle studies and the second year being half of the programme carried out for second-cycle studies. This is a very convenient solution. The only barrier is the need to pursue first and second-cycle studies at the Centre for International Education of the Lodz University of Technology, as the French engineer qualification involves two levels of the Polish Qualification Framework (VI and VII). The

diploma of a French engineer is the equivalent of the master's level in Poland. This solution is linked to the initiation at PL of procedures for the recognition of competences acquired on the formal path in another European university. This is one of the basic principles of the ECTS system adopted in Poland. Through the obligatory preparation of competence recognition matrices, partners recognise each other's learning outcomes acquired outside the home institution.

The implementation of the qualification framework has significantly simplified

DIAGRAM 22. Student exchange scheme with an exemplary French *grande école* before the implementation of the European Qualifications Framework

101 Source: <https://www.cti-commission.fr/fonds-documentaire>.

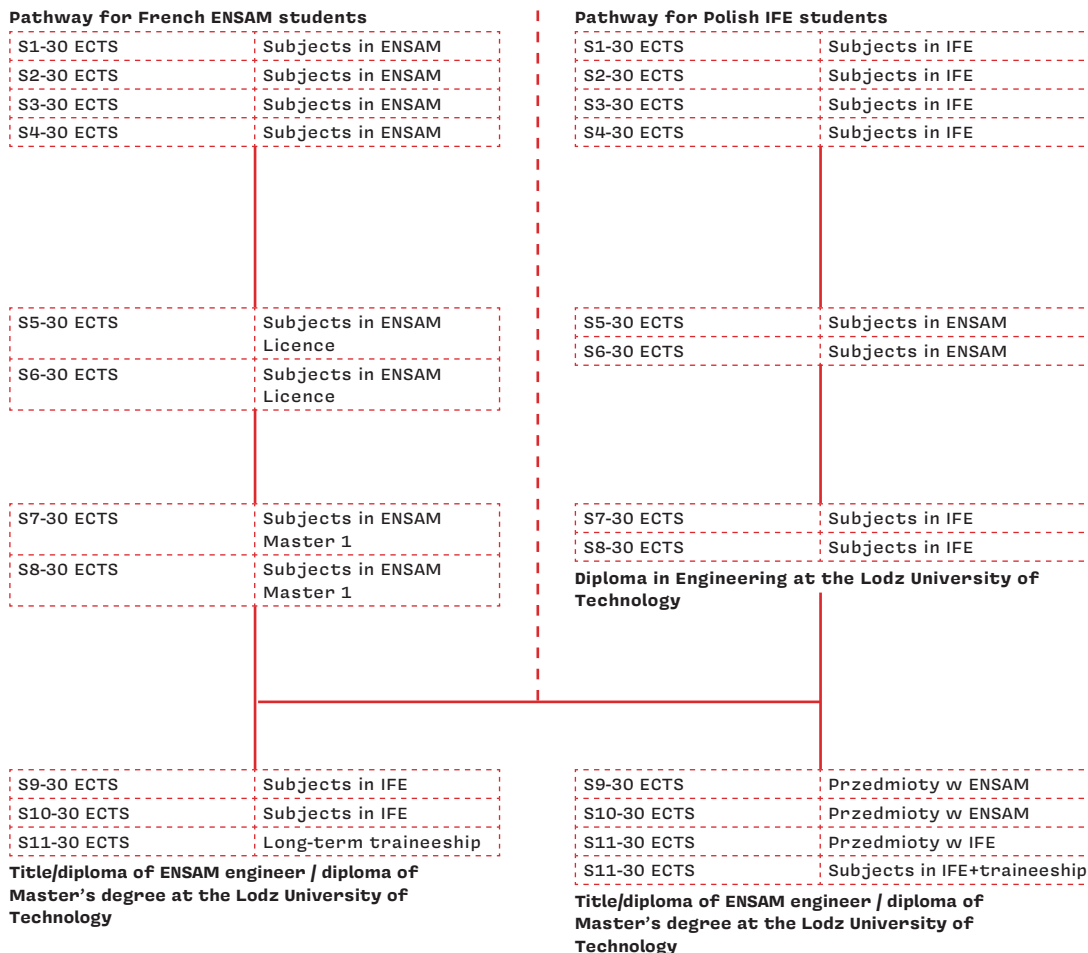
the path of obtaining a Polish degree for French students. Thanks to the mechanism of recognition of learning outcomes acquired at their home university, French students spend one year in Poland, acquiring 60 ECTS (50%) enrolled in a four-semester second-cycle programme. A very interesting element of the agreement is the long-term internship of a student in the third semester. It may be carried out in Poland or France, but it is supervised by both parties involved in the implementation of the agreement. The detailed course of mobility of double degree

students, taking into account the latest legal solutions both in Poland and in France, is illustrated in the diagram below.

Of course, the double degree agreements signed with French *grandes écoles* represent only a fragment of the agreements in place. As you know, quite a few French universities (especially universities and business schools) adopted the Bologna system many years ago.

This makes it possible to sign agreements for single levels of the national qualifications framework, and exchange schemes

DIAGRAM 23. Student mobility scheme under the double degree agreement – Lodz University of Technology – ENSAM 2019



Source: study by Dorota Piotrowska (PL), Jean Quesada, Andela Ceau-Dura, Agnes de Bourg (ENSAM Cluny – negotiating documents for double degree agreements - Łódź/Paris 2019)

Agreements for first- and second-cycle studies with other French universities that have adopted the two-cycle study system are very popular among students of the Lodz University of Technology.

are much simpler. Agreements for first- and second-cycle studies with other French universities that have adopted the two-cycle study system are very popular among students of the Lodz University of Technology. In addition, students of the Lodz University of Technology can implement double degree agreements with countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and Russia. As in the case of the previously described *grandes écoles*, the award of a qualification is based on the recognition of part of the field of study learning outcomes pursued by students as part of their programmes at their home institutions. A very important element of such agreements are the carefully negotiated competency matrices of the participating exchange students. This also entails the need to prepare detailed documentation confirming the acquisition of learning outcomes contained in both the Polish and French qualification standards.

Double degree agreements with France are not the simplest. However, it has to be said that these are partnerships that have uniquely translated into processes of improving the quality of education at the PŁ. The very stringent requirements for the award of French qualifications, especially the degree of engineer, have influenced the implementation of similar quality mechanisms both at the level of the substantive scope of the study programme and the administrative arrangements related to the day-to-day running of a given study programme.

The university also implements several joint study programme agreements that lead to a joint degree. These agreements are usually connected with completely new courses, which in name as well as in content coincide with the offer of the study programme of the foreign partner. This cooperation is characterised by a very strong co-leading of the programme by both partners and a mutual commitment to continuous improvement of the programme. In the experience of the PŁ, however, such agreements are much more exposed to the risk of a misalignment between the solutions adopted jointly and the legal regulations in force in the partner countries concerned. This is one of the reasons why, until recently, the Lodz University of Technology has not implemented the procedure for awarding a joint degree under such an agreement, as it involved a number of requirements that were impossible to fulfil on the part of the partner. Now that new regulations have been introduced, a common diploma template has been negotiated, to be awarded simultaneously by the two universities benefiting from the agreement.

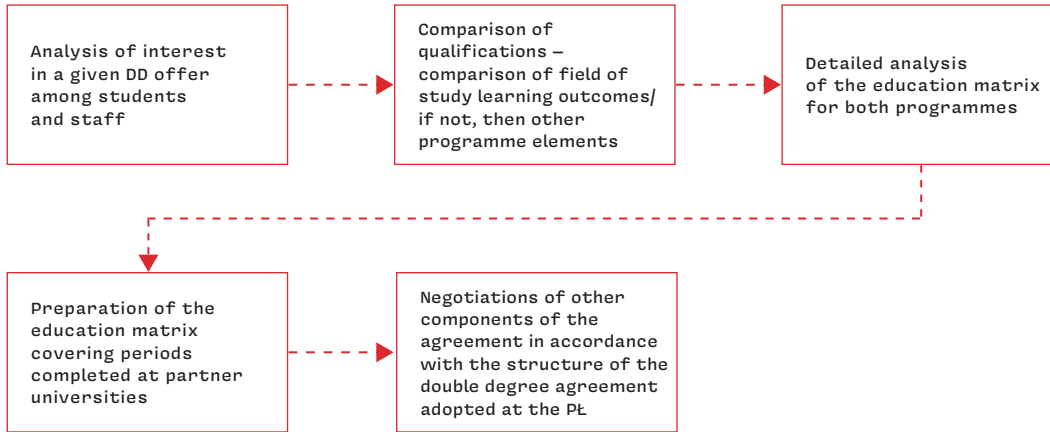


DIAGRAM 24. Stages of negotiating a double degree agreement as part of the university procedure at the Lodz University of Technology

Source: study by Dorota Piotrowska - presentation from the webinar "Double degrees in light of the new law", 17.12.2020. Workshop organisers: NAWA and IROs Forum

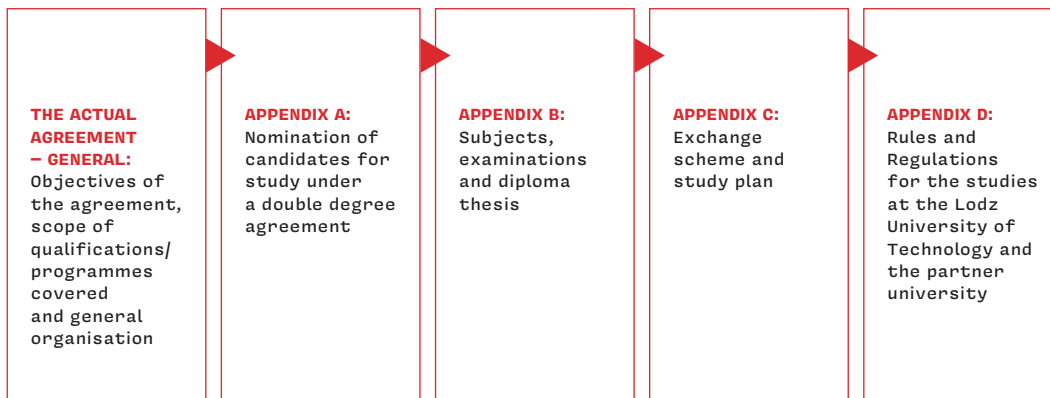


DIAGRAM 25. General scheme of the structure of the double degree agreement signed at the Lodz University of Technolog

Source: study by Dorota Piotrowska - presentation from the webinar "Double degrees in light of the new law", 17.12.2020. Workshop organisers: NAWA and IROs Forum

Over the last 15 years, the Lodz University of Technology has signed double degree agreements, which in total covered 85 programmes (of which 42 at the bachelor/engineering level, 31 at the master's level and 12 at the doctoral level). This rich experience has enabled us to develop a model approach to all stages of negotiating and implementing double degree agreements.

The university has created a procedure and recommendations to help negotiators carry out the negotiation process with good quality. Both the procedure and the description of the individual steps are available in Polish and English with reference to the relevant legal provisions in order to best explain to the partners the need to implement the individual steps and stages of the

negotiations. Both the process and its individual stages are schematically included in Diagram 24 above.

Most European countries now have defined field of study learning outcomes in line with the national qualifications framework. This is an excellent tool for comparing individual qualifications and a very convenient starting point for further analyses based on the verification of the scope of individual semesters and subjects.

The observation of the Lodz University of Technology shows also that the tool in the form of learning outcomes templates is becoming more and more popular at European universities. It is a very convenient component of a study programme visualising the path of implementation of a given standard of education described in the list of field of study learning outcomes.

In order to ensure an adequate level of quality of the signed agreements, a general agreement template with a structure of annexes has been developed at the PŁ to ensure that the agreement refers to all the necessary elements to guarantee compliance with the legislation of both countries. The above diagram (Diagram 25) illustrates the scope of necessary arrangements.

The long-standing experience of the Lodz University of Technology has demonstrated the unquestionable added value of implementing double degree agreements. Since the very beginning of such agreements, a lot of inspiration has been drawn from the experience of the partner universities in the field of, among others, the implementation of diploma theses, implementation of active education methods or effective verification of learning outcomes. Cooperation on double degree agreements has also laid the foundations for new models of involving different stakeholders from the business environment in the education process.

The perspective of the Lodz University of Technology clearly shows that the joint implementation of the educational process in a given study programme, even if it does not concern a completely joint programme, but only a part of the co-taught subjects, is one of the most important tools for interaction between universities and definitely one of the strongest axes for building strategic partnerships.

Joint education at the AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow

ALEKSANDRA PERKINS-OLESZKOWICZ

The AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow

The AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow (AGH) is a modern public university developing partnerships with universities in Poland, Europe and worldwide. AGH is a technical university where the sciences have a very strong representation and form the basis for the development of a wide range of applied sciences with a gradually increasing role of social sciences and humanities. The main objective of the AGH is to develop knowledge and educate students in the domestic and foreign educational space, which results in a strong position of the university graduates on the labour market.

Following the global trends in the internationalisation of higher education, AGH is constantly expanding its offer of double degree programmes in second and third degree studies.

AGH is currently a party to 31 double degree agreements with prestigious universities of Germany, France, Japan, Russia, Ukraine and Finland, such as:

- *Télécom Paris* (previously *L'École Nationale Supérieure des Telecommunications*), France;
- Graduate School of Engineering, Hokkaido University, Japan;
- *Technische Universität Bergakademie Freiberg*, Germany.

Graduate of the History Department of the Jagiellonian University and the Law, Administration and International Relations Department of the Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Cracow University. For six years, she has worked in the Foreign Relations Department of the AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow as a senior administrative specialist. Responsible for the administrative coordination of cooperation agreements, including those with a common educational focus. Administrative coordinator of the Erasmus+ programme educational mobility with partner countries at the AGH. She has experience in the application and implementation of international educational projects, including NAWA projects such as *Modern Foreign Promotion* and *SPINAKEE – Intensive International Education Programmes*. Moderator of the workshop on double degrees, organised by IROs Forum in cooperation with NAWA as part of the series “Challenges and good practices in the area of internationalisation of higher education” in 2020. Her passion is playing the piano, she graduated from a second level music school in piano class.



- KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden.
 - Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical University of Oil and Gas, Ukraine
- Five reasons to take advantage of a double degree are:

inter alia, obtaining two university degrees at the same time, a unique combination of two related subject areas with different approaches, competitiveness in the labour market, gaining interesting experience in an international environment.

TABLE 6. Semester timetable for the management field of study (degree path: financial management)

SEMESTER TIMETABLE

Effective from the academic year 2020/2021

Field of study:		Management, degree path: financial management									
Code	Name of the class module	Lecture	Auditory classes	Laboratory classes	Project classes	Workshop classes	Foreign language course	ECTS	Examination	Recognition of learning outcomes	
Semester 1											
ZZRZ-2-101-s	Macroeconomics	45	30	0	0	0	0	6	Yes	No	
ZZRZ-2-102-s	Modern management concepts	45	30	0	0	0	0	6	Yes	No	
ZZRZ-2-103-s	Quantitative methods in management	30	0	0	30	0	0	5	No	No	
ZZRZ-2-106-s	Business negotiations	15	15	0	0	0	0	2	No	No	
ZZRZ-2-104-s	Strategic management	30	15	0	0	0	0	4	Yes	No	
	Elective module	15	15	0	0	0	0	3	No	Yes	
ZZRZ-2-109-s	Foreign language B2+ (Polish) – compulsory specialist language course in second-cycle studies	0	0	0	0	0	30	3	Yes	No	
	Polish language course for foreign students	0	0	0	0	0	30		No	No	
	Sum	180	105	0	30	0	60	29			
Semester 2											
ZZRZ-2-105-s	Corporate social responsibility	15	15	0	0	0	0	2	No	Yes	
ZZRZ-2-201-s	Entrepreneurship and innovation	30	15	0	0	0	0	4	Yes	Yes	
ZZRZ-2-107-s	Management accounting	30	15	0	0	0	0	3	No	No	
ZZRZ-2-203-s	Financial reporting standards	30	45	0	0	0	0	6	Yes	No	
ZZRZ-2-205-s	Public finances management	30	30	0	0	0	0	5	No	No	
ZZRZ-2-206-s	Tax law	30	15	0	0	0	0	3	No	No	
ZZRZ-2-207-s	Computer financial systems	15	0	30	0	0	0	3	No	No	
ZZRZ-2-204-s	Corporate financial management	45	30	0	0	0	0	6	Yes	Yes	
	Sum	225	165	30	0	0	0	32			
Semester 3											
ZZRZ-2-301-s	Scientific research module	15	15	0	0	0	0	3	No	No	
ZZRZ-2-302-s	Internal audit and financial review	30	15	0	0	0	0	4	No	No	
ZZRZ-2-303-s	Financial market instruments	30	15	0	0	0	0	4	No	No	
ZZRZ-2-304-s	Banking and insurance products	45	30	0	0	0	0	6	Yes	No	
	Elective module	15	15	0	0	0	0	3	No	Yes	
	Elective module	15	15	0	0	0	0	3	No	Yes	
	Elective module	15	15	0	0	0	0	3	No	Yes	
	Elective module	15	15	0	0	0	0	3	No	Yes	
	Sum	180	135	0	0	0	0	29			
Semester 4											
ZZRZ-2-404-s	Diploma thesis (Master's thesis)	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	No	No	
ZZRZ-2-305-s	Strategic controlling	30	45	0	0	0	0	6	Yes	No	
	Elective module in a foreign language	30	30	0	0	0	0	5	No	No	
	Sum	60	75	0	0	0	0	31			

Source: <https://sylabusy.agh.edu.pl/pl/1/2/17/1/2/12/40>

DOCTORAL STUDIES IN THE DOUBLE DEGREE PROGRAMME

ANNA ŚCIAŻKO, PHD



She completed her studies in renewable energy at the RES (The School for Renewable Energy Science, Iceland) and in power engineering (specialisation: computer modelling in power engineering) at the AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow, and in computer science at the Jagiellonian University. She pursued her doctoral studies through a double degree programme between the AGH and the Japanese SIT. She is currently working at the Institute of Industrial Science at the University of Tokyo.

From 2012 to 2015, I pursued my doctoral studies in the double degree programme between the University of Science and Technology in Cracow (AGH) and the Shibaura Institute of Technology in Japan (SIT). The doctoral dissertation was prepared under the supervision of Janusz S. Szmyd, BEng, PhD, DSc (AGH) and Prof. Shinji Kimijima (SIT). Participation in the programme was an opportunity to gain experience in research work in two different research centres. Despite the undoubted cultural differences, thanks to the support of the academic and administrative staff of both universities, the programme and organisation of the travel were a success. Studying as part of double degree programmes allows to gain interesting experience in an international environment and increase competitiveness on the labour market.

The AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow
The Shibaura Institute of Technology in Japan (SIT)

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE AGH AND THE IVANO-FRANKIVSK NATIONAL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF OIL AND GAS

The beginning of cooperation between the AGH University of Science and Technology and the National Technical University of Oil and Gas in Ivano-Frankivsk (IFNTUNG) dates back to 1994, when the first agreement between the two universities was signed. It covered scientific and technical cooperation, exchange of experience, exchange of students and programmes, as well as traineeships and staff training.

From 2010 to 2019, more than 500 students from 5 IFNTUNG educational and research institutes (i.e. Oil and Gas Engineering; Nature Science and Tourism; Mechanical Engineering; Economics and Management; Construction and Energy) studied at the AGH in accordance with agreements on the joint education of students pursuing their Master's degree. Within the framework of the double degree programme, the majority of Ukrainian students studied such specialisations in the fields of oil engineering, gas engineering, oil drilling, oil geology, geophysics and environmental engineering and protection.

An example of efficient implementation of double degree programmes at our university is the cooperation of the Faculty of Management of AGH (WZ AGH) with the Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical University of Oil and Gas. Education takes place in

the field of Master's studies in management (diploma paths: business management and financial management). WZ AGH also cooperates with the Lviv Polytechnic National University (field of study: management - diploma path: business management or



EDUCATION REFORM THROUGH INTERNATIONAL KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

PROF. OLEG VYTYAZ, Director of the Institute of Oil and Gas Engineering IFNTUNG (Ukraine)

IFNTUNG's cooperation with the AGH is an important step in the development of international cooperation of the Ukrainian university and its integration into the European educational and scientific community. The cooperation started in 1994, when the first agreement between the universities was signed. It covered scientific and technical cooperation, exchange of experience, exchange of students and programmes, as well as traineeships and staff training. From 2010 to 2019, more than 500 students from five IFNTUNG educational and research institutes (i.e. Oil and Gas Engineering; Nature Science and Tourism; Mechanical Engineering; Economics and Management; Architecture, Construction and Energy) studied at the AGH in accordance with agreements on the joint education of students at pursuing a Master's degree. Most of the Ukrainian students studied under the double degree programme in specialisations such as oil engineering, gas engineering, oil drilling, oil geology, geophysics and environmental engineering and protection, which gave Ukrainian students the opportunity to study simultaneously on integrated programmes at two universities and receive two degrees from partner universities. The implementation of double degree programmes ensures that students not only gain the experience of studying at a foreign university and expand their professional training opportunities, but also increase their level of competitiveness on the labour market.

In February 2020, IFNTUNG was the first Ukrainian university to sign new agreements with the AGH, on the admission and study of foreign students at the AGH-UST. These agreements already take into account the requirements of the new Act 2.0 on higher education in Poland.

The implementation of the programme of joint teaching of students, thanks to the support of the AGH Rector, Prof. Tadeusz Słomka, and the IFNTUNG Rector, Prof. Yevstakhia Kryzhanivski, makes it possible to exercise the right to academic mobility and ensure European educational quality standards. The foundations were thus laid down for long-term cooperation, which will undoubtedly lead to finding ways of improving the quality, transparency and unification of education for Ukrainian students. The development of common educational programmes and the formulation of common approaches to educational content and student competence requirements at higher education levels is an important part of the international activities of both universities.

The Institute of Oil and Gas Engineering IFNTUNG
The AGH University of Science and Technology

management – diploma path: financial management) and with the Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University (field of study: computer science and econometrics).

It is worth emphasising that AGH has been conducting double degree programmes with the above-mentioned universities since 2014/2015.

Students pursue simultaneous education at the AGH University of Science and Technology and at their home institution according to mutually agreed time schedules. The programme is adequate for the full four-semester study programme of second-cycle studies in the field of management.

T.I.M.E. TOP INDUSTRIAL MANAGERS IN ENGINEERING FOR EUROPE

One of the most interesting proposals of our university concerning joint education is the Top Industrial Managers in Engineering for Europe (T.I.M.E.) programme. AGH was admitted to the T.I.M.E. association on 14 October 2009.

Currently, the AGH is cooperating with four universities within the T.I.M.E. programme:

- *École Centrale de Lille,*
- *École Centrale de Lyon,*
- *École Centrale Marseille,*
- *École Centrale de Nantes.*

The primary objective of the programme is bicultural education within the framework of bilateral cooperation between associated universities, leading to a double degree. A longer stay at a partner university (two years) and studying in the language of the partner is to provide a better understanding of the culture and customs of the country in question. It is assumed that in the case of a positive experience, the foreign candidate will be an active ambassador of the partner country in their own country and beyond.

The programme involves extending standard courses by one year (four years at the home university and two years at the partner university), studying in the partner's language and treating foreign students as equal to their own students.

The programme is open to students of engineering faculties graduating from the first-cycle programme or commencing education in the second-cycle programme at a member university of the T.I.M.E. Association. Students interested in the programme are obliged to complete a part of their studies at a host university, which is a member of the T.I.M.E. Association and which has concluded an agreement on mutual cooperation with the AGH.

The main assets of the T.I.M.E. programme result from the objectives pursued, the principles developed and verified and the results achieved so far. So far, the programme is the only one in Europe that allows one, at a relatively low time expenditure (extension of studies by one year), to learn about the culture and customs of another country and the value of its educational system. And all this is crowned with two degrees that increase employability on the European labour market.

The Jagiellonian University

- experience of coordinators, partners and graduates
of double degree studies

**IMESS - INTERNATIONAL MASTER IN ECONOMY, STATE AND SOCIETY
(DOUBLE DEGREE FROM UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON)**



AGNIESZKA SADECKA, PHD
Programme coordinator at the UJ

The IMESS - International Master in Economy, State and Society programme is run in collaboration with the UK University College London - UCL, ranked among the world's top ten universities in many university rankings. Students spend their first year at UCL's School of Slavonic and East European Studies, where they receive a thorough theoretical and methodological preparation before continuing their studies in a Central and Eastern European country and gaining practical experience in the region. The IMESS consortium brings together top universities from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Russia, Serbia and Hungary, including the Jagiellonian University (UJ), offering a wide range of subjects and consultations with experts in their field. This interdisciplinary field of study is divided into four thematic paths, allowing students to specialise

in economic, political, social or related to international relations and global economics. Great emphasis is placed on learning the language of the country of the student's choice, as the consortium considers this skill to be a prerequisite for understanding the complexity and realities of the country studied. Students receive a double Master's degree, from UCL and one of its partner universities.

IMESS is one of the best master's programmes in the field of Central and Eastern European Studies, with over 10 years of tradition, attracting students from all over the world. We are very proud to be part of this consortium and to be able to host exceptionally talented students at the Jagiellonian University who are fascinated by our region. Studying at two universities simultaneously, as part of a broader consortium, gives students the opportunity to experience different academic cultures and benefit from the knowledge and experience of experts belonging to different scientific disciplines and from different countries. This enables students to take a broader view of the issues under investigation and also to acquire intercultural competence. The very fact that programme graduates work in prestigious think tanks, consultancies, international institutions and government agencies, often becoming informal spokespersons for our region, is a source of great satisfaction for us.



KAROLINA CZERSKA-SHAW, PHD
Programme coordinator at the UJ

As an academician who has been coordinating Erasmus Mundus programmes for over 10 years in the areas of double study programmes, multi-degree studies and joint studies, I believe that these networks and what they produce are crucial to the development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and to the educational experience and personal development of young people. I would like to highlight three specific advantages of such programmes:

1. **A mobility experience**, thanks to which students can develop cross-cutting skills so necessary in today's world. The fact that mobility is at the heart of this educational experience allows students to acquire, among other things, the ability to adapt, communicate interculturally and deal with cultural diversity in practice. This is a completely unique opportunity of great significance, which cannot be replaced by remote learning from the comfort of one's own home.

2. **Multicultural environment** - these types of programmes attract students from all over the world who come from different backgrounds and life experiences, but share a common goal. Learning in a multicultural environment and the experiences gained outside the university, thanks to their diversity and the often fruitful, though sometimes demanding exchange of opinions, knowledge and ideas, is a unique space for establishing civic dialogue and personal development.

3. **Cutting-edge forms of teaching and learning** - internationalised study programmes are at the forefront of new teaching and learning tools and techniques that are developed through close collaboration between partner institutions and external stakeholders, various funding opportunities on a European or international scale, and sharing and aligning best practices. Staff members are often selected on the basis of their many years of research experience, but also their teaching experience at the international level and their student-centred and problem-solving approach.

International study programmes are constantly adapting to new challenges and advances in the field of higher education today through collaboration, diversity and mobility. I am convinced that students of these programmes graduate with a solid set of competences needed to deal with the challenges and opportunities of modern societies.

Graduates of our programme are future global leaders.

CEERES - CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPEAN, RUSSIAN AND EURASIAN STUDIES

AMMON CHESKIN, PHD

University of Glasgow (partner university)

The joint studies we offer give students the opportunity to gain world-class experience. The opportunity to study at different international universities is a key reason why many of our students choose the Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Programme on Central and Eastern European, Russian and Eurasian Studies (CEERES). This type of mobility allows students to gain a unique cultural and academic experience through

exposure to different teaching styles and institutional cultures. Employers are particularly impressed by such international experience, which is reflected in the thriving careers of our graduates. From a student perspective, this is perhaps the most obvious advantage of obtaining a double degree. Graduates of our programme are future global leaders. In terms of institutional cooperation, the double degree opens the doors for joint projects conducted at our eight international partner universities. This has significantly increased the reputation of the UJ internationally - it is now leading the way in terms of internationalisation.

EKATERINA DOMORENOK, PROFITIT

University of Padua (partner university)

Our experience of participating in the double degree programme in European Studies, which is run by the University of Padua and the Jagiellonian University, has been extremely positive, although it has involved additional administrative work. In particular, we have seen the enormous

added value that this programme brings to the lives of our students. They very much appreciate their studies at the UJ, both in terms of the quality of education and the opportunity to live and study in an international environment. As far as the didactic dimension is concerned, we are convinced that this exchange programme greatly enriches our educational offer, providing study paths that perfectly complement the first-year programme at the University of Padua. We believe that the programme would benefit from further development of cooperation and exchange between the teaching staff of both universities.

ALEXIA FAFARA

Graduate of a double degree programme conducted at the Jagiellonian University and Sciences Po Strasbourg (2016-2018)

I had the pleasure of being a student of the double Master's programme in European Studies run by Sciences Po Strasbourg together with the Institute of European Studies of the Jagiellonian University from 2016 to 2018. It was certainly the best experience of my time at university, precisely because my studies took place in two different places.

Participating in a double degree programme provides the opportunity to meet more people from different cultures and backgrounds, to explore different teaching

methods and approaches to the same subject, and increases our level of understanding of other people's opinions. I felt privileged because there are usually fewer students participating in this type of programme than in a standard course of study, so it was easier for me to establish relationships with my colleagues, but above all with the teaching staff themselves, who guided us throughout the programme with particular commitment. In addition, we could always talk to the lecturers, whereas in the standard programmes the academic staff often did not even remember my name. In other words, it was not just a purely academic experience, but rather a turning point that made my development in all areas of life to take off.

[Alexia Fafara is currently an assistant in the Department of Political Studies and Governance at the College of Europe].

We would like to thank Natasza Styczyńska and Dorothea Maciejowska from the Jagiellonian University for providing these materials.

The internationalisation of double degree programmes in philological studies in the COVID-19 era – is this a mission doomed to failure?

JAROSŁAW KRAJKA, PHD, DSC, PROF. UMCS
Maria Curie-Skłodowska University
in Lublin

Head of the Department of Applied Linguistics at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, researching the problems of glottodidactics, socio-cultural conditions of language teaching and intercultural communication in electronic media, founder and editor-in-chief of the scientific journal “Teaching English with Technology” (Scopus), initiator and coordinator of the Polish-German cultural and translation studies conducted by UMCS together with the University of Potsdam.



With the strengthening of the EHEA, the well-established links between universities within the Erasmus+ programme and the growing interest in undertaking studies abroad (in whole or in part), it has become natural to look for opportunities to cooperate with partner universities in developing educational programmes. However, both the preparation and implementation of such double degree programmes by two universities face a number of problems and challenges. It is important to be aware of them, to anticipate and prevent them well in advance, and to react quickly and address major problems as they arise, without waiting for them to escalate to insurmountable proportions.

The aim of this paper is to present an account of the process of preparation and implementation of international double degree studies called the “Polish-German Cultural and Translation Studies” conducted jointly by the Institute of Slavonic Studies at Potsdam University (Germany) and the Department of Applied Linguistics of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (UMCS). The discussion will be illustrated by examples of real-life challenges and issues encountered during the implementation of the 2017-2021 programme.

**RESEARCH BACKGROUND
- INSPIRATION FOR AN
INTERNATIONALISED STUDY
PROGRAMME TELE-COLLABORATION
RESEARCH**

The literature on applied linguistics, teacher and translator education, language acquisition and the socio-cultural dimensions of foreign language methodology points to clear benefits of collaboration via electronic means (tele-collaboration) both for improving language proficiency and building professional competence. Research on tele-collaboration¹⁰² postulates the use of virtual groups at partner universities to improve learners' linguistic competence (more experts for conversation), their cultural awareness, digital skills with techno-pedagogical skills and intercultural communicative competence. All these activities are carried out in tandem (two languages are used with native speakers on both sides), so that there is a mutual expert-student relationship.

The concept of tandem teaching, in which students are native users for their partners, was also used within the project *Polish-German Cultural and Translation Studies* (hereafter PNSKT), organised by the Institute of Slavonic Studies at Potsdam University (Germany) and the Department of Applied Linguistics at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. The recruitment of students by both universities leads to a situation in which there is a roughly similar number of native Polish students learning German (recruited at UMCS from among Polish candidates) and native German students learning Polish (recruited at the UP from German candidates).

A significant number of studies on tele-collaboration also point to the benefits of virtual partnerships in building professional skills – both in teacher education and interpreter training¹⁰³. Particularly interesting (but at the same time challenging)

is the idea of co-creating knowledge in the process of raising awareness among teachers/interpreters – working in tandem is not limited to a simple exchange of information, joint knowledge building implies equal involvement of partners on both sides. These are some of our earlier studies, which served as an inspiration for the PNSKT project:

- **OBSERVE ME FROM A DISTANCE (2013)** – project groups consisted of trainee teachers from two partner institutions who exchanged their thoughts after the placements, in synchronous and asynchronous modes.
- **I CAN'T, YOU CAN (2014)** – tandems of Polish students and Slovenian ESP (English for Specific Purposes) teachers worked together to develop ESP teaching materials.
- **MENTORING AT A DISTANCE (2019)** – tandems of Polish (more experienced) trainee teachers provided assistance to Turkish trainee teachers during their traineeship in the town of Burdur in Turkey.

¹⁰² S. Guth, F. Helm, R. O'Dowd, *University Language Classes Collaborating Online. A Report on the Integration of Telecollaborative Networks in European Universities. INTENT Project Final Report*, Komisja Europejska, Brussel 2012.

¹⁰³ N. Guichon, M. Hauck, *Teacher education research in CALL and CMC: More in demand than ever*, "ReCALL", no. 23(3), 2011, pp. 187-199; S. Guth, F. Helm, R. O'Dowd, *University Language Classes Collaborating Online, op.cit.*; M. Dooly, R. Sadler, *Filling in the gaps: Linking theory and practice through telecollaboration in teacher education*, "ReCALL", no. 25(1), 2013, pp. 4-29; J. Krajka, M. Marczak, S. Tatar, S. Yildiz, *Building ESP teacher awareness through intercultural tandems - post-practicum experience*, "English for Specific Purposes World", no. 14(38), 2013, pp. 1-18, http://www.esp-world.info/Articles_38/krajka_et_al_final_Copy.pdf, accessed: 31.07.2017.

Many programmes use tele-collaboration as an additional support for teaching different subjects. What distinguishes PNSKT is the systematic combination of tele-collaboration and face-to-face collaboration. Tele-collaboration is undertaken during the first and last semesters of studies, while at the same time ensuring face-to-face cooperation during joint studies at partner institutions for both groups (semesters 2 and 3 for Polish and German students in Potsdam, semesters 4 and 5 for both groups in Lublin) is a truly innovative solution to ensure effective co-creation of knowledge, development of language proficiency, and intercultural communicative competence.

RESEARCH ON INTERCULTURAL METHODOLOGY IN EUROPEAN LANGUAGE POLICY

Cross-cultural research, and in particular the influence of social and cultural variables on the nature, speed and effectiveness of foreign/second language acquisition, is currently of great interest to both teachers and learners. The contributions of theories on culturally conditioned communication styles¹⁰⁴, cultural intelligence and the multicultural classroom¹⁰⁵, the cultural appropriateness of language teaching methods and learning cultures¹⁰⁶, instructional methods and sociocultural expectations of learners¹⁰⁷, and socially responsive pedagogy¹⁰⁸ provide a solid foundation for concepts of language education in internationalised settings. In the case of study programmes co-taught by two different higher education institutions, it is particularly interesting to see how the teaching of foreign languages (e.g. Polish and German in the case of the programme analysed in this article) is shaped across cultural divisions. By taking language classes alternately in Germany and Poland, students have the opportunity to try out different approaches to language teaching and learning and to observe in practice the sociocultural differences in language acquisition.

Another interesting development, which has given rise to a philological double degree programme bringing together Polish and German students in tandem, is the growing importance of interlanguage mediation in European politics. According to the CEFR Companion Volume,¹⁰⁹ mediation has become the fourth pillar of language competence, gaining importance in language education in European countries.

With the addition of reference scales with verified descriptors for different areas of mediation (see Tables 7 and 8), philological education at the university level will no longer focus exclusively on a selected language, its culture and literature (e.g. German for Polish students), but rather on a flexible switching and moving from one language/culture/literary work to another, from one language system to another. The new descriptors for mediation, which include translation as a social service and the communication of information given in

¹⁰⁴ L. Katz, *Negotiating International Business - The Negotiator's Reference Guide to 50 Countries Around the World*, BookSurge Publishing, Charleston 2006, S.C.

¹⁰⁵ P.C. Earley, S. Ang, *Cultural Intelligence: Individual Interactions Across Cultures*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA 2003; S. Ang, L. Van Dyne, C. Koh, K.Y. Ng, K.J. Templer, C. Tay, N.A. Chandrasekar, *Cultural intelligence: Its measurement and effects on cultural judgment and decision making, cultural adaptation and task performance*, "Management and Organization Review", no. 3(3), 2007, 335-71; S.A.A. Ahmadi, H. Safarzadeh, M.J. Hozoori, F. Dehnavi, *The role of cultural intelligence of managers in promoting employees' collaboration*, "Management Science Letters", no. 3, 2013, 1915-926.

¹⁰⁶ M. Cortazzi, L. Jin, Z. Wang, *Cultivators, cows and computers: Chinese learners' metaphors of teachers*, [in:] *Internationalizing the University. The Chinese Context*, ed. T. Coverdale-Jones and P. Rastall, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2009, pp. 107-29.

¹⁰⁷ X. Liao, *The need for communicative language teaching in China*, "ELT Journal", no. 58, 2004, 270-73; R. Chowdhury, *International TESOL teacher training and EFL contexts: The cultural disillusionment factor*, "Australian Journal of Education", no. 47(3), 2003, pp. 283-302; C. Kramsch, P. Sullivan, *Appropriate pedagogy*, "ELT Journal", no. 46(4), 1996, 340-49; X. Liao, *The need for communicative language teaching in China*, "ELT Journal", no. 58, 2004, 270-73.

¹⁰⁸ S.L. McKay, W. Bokhorst-Heng, *International English in its sociolinguistic contexts: Towards a socially sensitive pedagogy*, Routledge, New York 2008.

¹⁰⁹ Council of Europe, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Companion Volume with New Descriptors*, Strasbourg 2018.

MEDIATION IN INFORMAL SITUATIONS (WITH FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES)

C2	A person using language at this level can communicate in clear, fluent, well-structured (Language B) the sense of what is said in (Language A) on a wide range of general and specialised topics, maintaining appropriate style and register, conveying finer shades of meaning and elaborating on sociocultural implications.
C1	A person using language at this level can communicate fluently in (Language B) the sense of what is said in (Language A) on a wide range of subjects of personal, academic and professional interest, conveying significant information clearly and concisely as well as explaining cultural references.
B2	A person using language at this level can mediate (between Language A and Language B), conveying detailed information, drawing the attention of both sides to background information and sociocultural cues, and posing clarification and follow-up questions or statements as necessary. Can communicate in (Language B) the sense of what is said in a welcome address, anecdote or presentation in his/her field given in (Language A), interpreting cultural cues appropriately and giving additional explanations when necessary, provided that the speaker stops frequently in order to allow time for him/her to do so. Can communicate in (Language B) the sense of what is said in (Language A) on subjects within his/her fields of interest, conveying and when necessary explaining the significance of important statements and viewpoints, provided speakers give clarifications if needed.
B1	A person using language at this level can communicate in (Language B) the main sense of what is said in (Language A) on subjects within his/her fields of interest, conveying straightforward factual information and explicit cultural references, provided that he/she can prepare beforehand and that the speakers articulate clearly in everyday language. Can communicate in (Language B) the main sense of what is said in (Language A) on subjects of personal interest, whilst following important politeness conventions, provided that the speakers articulate clearly in standard language and that he/she can ask for clarification and pause to plan how to express things.
A2	A person using language at this level can communicate in (Language B) the overall sense of what is said in (Language A) in everyday situations, following basic cultural conventions and conveying the essential information, provided that the speakers articulate clearly in standard language and that he/she can ask for repetition and clarification. Can communicate in (Language B) the main point of what is said in (Language A) in predictable, everyday situations, conveying back and forth information about personal wants and needs, provided that the speakers help with formulation.
A1	A person using language at this level can communicate (in Language B) other people's personal details and very simple, predictable information available (in Language A), provided other people help with formulation.
pre-A1	No descriptors available

Source: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Companion Volume with New Descriptors, Council of Europe, Strasbourg 2018

TABLE 7. Descriptors of “Translation as a Social Service” from the CEFR Companion Volume

written form, create a need to train students in mediation between languages in a variety of real-life situations. Therefore, the PNSKT project aims at developing students’ translation and interpreting skills in two languages (Polish and German) in various contexts: *a vista* interpreting, written translation of general and specialised texts, audio-visual translation, consecutive and simultaneous interpreting.

THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS A RESPONSE TO THE FINANCING CRISIS

Together with demographic changes resulting in a significant decline in the number of students in the second decade of the 21st century, universities in many European countries have entered an “arms race” to attract as many foreign students as possible. This was particularly evident in Poland

TRANSLATING A WRITTEN TEXT IN SPEECH

Note: as in any case where mediation between languages is involved, users can complete the descriptor by specifying the languages involved.

C2	A person using language at this level can provide fluent spoken translation (into language B) of abstract texts written (in language A) on a wide range of subjects of personal, academic and professional interest, successfully conveying evaluative aspects and arguments, including the nuances and implications associated with them.
C1	A person using language at this level can provide fluent spoken translation into (Language B) of complex texts written in (Language A) on a wide range of general and specialised topics, capturing most nuances.
B2	A person using language at this level can provide spoken translation into (Language B) of complex texts written in (Language A) containing information and arguments on subjects within his/her fields of professional, academic and personal interest.
B1	A person using language at this level can provide spoken translation into (Language B) of texts written in (Language A) containing information and arguments on subjects within his/her fields of professional, academic and personal interest, provided that they are written in uncomplicated, standard language. Can provide an approximate spoken translation into (Language B) of clear, well-structured informational texts written in (Language A) on subjects that are familiar or of personal interest, although his/her lexical limitations cause difficulty with formulation at times.
A2	A person using language at this level can provide an approximate spoken translation into (Language B) of short, simple everyday texts (e.g. brochure entries, notices, instructions, letters or emails) written in (Language A). Can provide a simple, rough, spoken translation into (Language B) of short, simple texts (e.g. notices on familiar subjects) written in (Language A), capturing the most essential point. Can provide a simple, rough spoken translation into (Language B) of routine information on familiar everyday subjects that is written in simple sentences in (Language A) (e.g. personal news, short narratives, directions, notices or instructions).
A1	A person using language at this level can provide a simple, rough spoken translation into (Language B) of simple, everyday words and phrases written in (Language A) that are encountered on signs and notices, posters, programmes, leaflets etc.
pre-A1	No descriptors available

Source: *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Companion Volume with New Descriptors*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg 2018

TABLE 8. “Translation as mediation” descriptors from the CEFR Companion Volume

until the current Higher Education Act was passed in 2018, as a result of which university funding is no longer strictly dependent on the number of students. Before 2018, however, internationalisation was used as a way to compensate for the loss of Polish students and the decrease in funding (under the previous system of student-based funding). Therefore, attracting students from abroad has become the main objective of many universities’ strategies. In order to increase revenues, students from abroad (e.g. Belarus or Ukraine) were therefore offered new paid fields of study.

This pursuit of foreign students, however, proved of doubtful effectiveness, and Polish students often complained of the discrimination they experienced in comparison with foreign students who paid for their education. In the case of philological studies, especially German philology outside Germany, the challenge is to find such a formula that would encourage foreign students to take up German studies in Poland. In particular, it proved to be a great challenge to find an attractive formula for German studies in Lublin, 600 km from the German border and 100 km from the Ukrainian border. In this

case, the facilities and teaching expertise in translation and interpreting at the Department of Applied Linguistics of the UMCS within the EU-funded project *UMCS for the labour market and the knowledge-based economy* (2010-2015) managed to attract the attention of the German partner and make it interested in cooperation with the UMCS. German partners had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with various translation and interpretation courses during a study visit to UMCS. They considered the EU-funded interpreting equipment (two labs with booths, portable interpreting kits, portable interpreter booths, CAT software) and know-how (materials, curricula, resources for teaching interpreting) as essential for developing interpreting skills. The PNSKT project is therefore a unique example of synergy, in which the partners use each other's facilities, resources and know-how in a planned and systematic way to provide the best possible educational experience for both Polish students learning German language and culture and German students dealing with Polish language and culture.

CURRICULA DESIGN

Given all the problems and challenges brought to higher education by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, such as lockdowns preventing participation in full-time classes, sudden shifts to remote teaching, quarantines and travel bans, it may seem impossible to continue running an internationalised double degree programme as described above in the article. Paradoxically, however, in some respects the sudden shift to remote teaching has eased some processes and reduced the financial burden on students. Therefore, in the following discussion we will consider the ambitious PNSKT programme in the context of online teaching and learning.

As both universities were keen to establish the closest possible cooperation in education, the model of a new, joint full-time study programme (BA or MA) in Cultural Studies and Translation Studies was adopted. Even before the pandemic, the development, negotiation and implementation of such a programme required a long and very complicated preparatory phase. Before the first enrolment in the 2019/2020 academic year, the two universities took two years to agree on a joint programme, obtain internal and external approvals and accreditations, come up with an attractive name and successfully promote the new programme.

The organisation of the PNSKT study programme required a high level of mobility, moving groups of students from one location to another for particular semesters. The aim was to maximise the potential of the partners in their respective fields (literary and cultural studies of the German partner, translation, interpretation and audio visual studies of the Polish partner). The specific set-up of the double degree programme, as discussed below, aimed to achieve reciprocity and recognition of the competences of both partners, while meeting local (national) requirements for certain elements of the undergraduate (Bachelor's) humanities programme:

- (1) During the first and last semesters, students studied separately at their home universities.
- (2) Both universities recognise the subjects and grades obtained at the other university in order to award a double degree.
- (3) First and last semesters are separate (though similar) to meet specific national needs.
- (4) Semesters 2, 3, 4 and 5 agreed jointly by both partners, with Polish and German students taking all subjects together.
- (5) In semester 2 and 3, courses and exams organised by the UP, and in semester 4 and 5 by the UMCS.
- (6) Both partners follow separate study regulations (*Studien- und Prüfungsordnung*) to meet national requirements.
- (7) The final thesis is written in one of the study languages (German or Polish).
- (8) Once the mutually agreed programme of study has been completed and 180 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits have been accumulated, both universities award a Bachelor's degree.
- (9) Each university issues a separate Bachelor's degree with an official seal.

The programme of study resulted in a relatively complex arrangement, as shown in Tables 9 and 10. While in general (and for the most part) both groups took the same subjects at their respective universities, which were transferred to the records of the partner university, in some cases (marked with colours), for logistical or legal reasons, there had to be slight discrepancies between the subjects taken by both groups.

2. Semester (Sommersemester): alle Studierende in Potsdam

Studierende aus Lublin

Studierende aus Potsdam

2. Summer Semester: all students in Potsdam

classes for students from Lublin

classes for students from Potsdam

SLP_BA_020	Einführung in die Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft 2 Introduction to literary and cultural studies 2	9 ECTS
Seminar	Einführung in die Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft 2 Introduction to literary and cultural studies 2	3
Übung/Tutorium	Begleitende Übung Tutorial/practical classes	3
Modulprüfung	Klausur Written examination	3
Z_DE_B2_01 Z_PL_BA_02	Sprachpraxis Polnisch 2/Sprachpraxis Deutsch 2 Practical language learning (German or Polish) 2	9 ECTS
Übung	Mündliche Kommunikation 2 Oral communication 2	3
Übung	Schriftliche Kommunikation 2 Written communication 2	3
Übung	Grammatik 2/Sprachstrukturen Grammar 2/Language structures	3
Übung	Deutsch als Fremdsprache (DaF) B2 Written and oral communication at B2 GER level	6
Übung	Sprachentandem Language tandem	3
SLP_BA_007	Aufbaumodul Polnische Literatur und Kultur (Typ C) Literature and Cultural Studies	6 ECTS
Seminar	Polnische Literatur und Kultur Classes in Polish literature and culture	3
Modulprüfung	Hausarbeit (10 Seiten) oder mündliche Prüfung (30 Min.) Written term paper (10 pages) or oral examination (30 minutes)	3
GER_BA_005 Schlüsselkompetenzen	Interkulturelle Kommunikation und Landeskunde/ Schlüsselkompetenzen Intercultural communication/elective subject Schlüsselkompetenzen (Studiumplus) Elective subjects	6 ECTS
Seminar	Interkulturelle Kommunikation und Landeskunde Intercultural communication and life and institutions studies	6
Lehrveranstaltung	Wahl aus dem Angebot Schlüsselkompetenzen Elective classes	6

TABLE 9. Joint programme of the 2nd semester (completed by both groups in Potsdam)

Source: own study

Paradoxically, the COVID-19 pandemic did not destroy the programme because of its interchangeable design. The first semester was at the home universities, which was convenient when the pandemic broke out. The second semester, completed by both groups in Potsdam, the Polish students took online, which was an opportunity to reduce their living costs.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The double degree programme, although uncomplicated at first sight, has proved difficult to manage and supervise by the university administration. Once the programme was approved, which was preceded by a two-year accreditation process in Germany and authorisation by the Ministry of Science and Culture of the State of Brandenburg, and a slightly shorter accreditation process in Poland, it was not possible to make any changes to the study programme. Difficulties with promotion and recruitment (typical for new study programmes) and high absenteeism in the first semester on the Polish side, combined with an unclear situation regarding financial support for Polish students going to Germany, made the start of the programme on the Polish side difficult.

Fortunately, thanks to the commitment of both partners, the second enrolment of the programme saw many more applications and a greater number of more disciplined and determined students. Even though the second year of the PNSKT started in the middle of the pandemic crisis, candidates on both sides enrolled and the programme ran much more smoothly.

Another source of challenge for the university administration are the systemic differences between Polish and German regulations on curriculum development, which cause some difficulties in the transfer of ECTS credits. The programme system at the UP assumes that the number of ECTS credits of each module is to be divisible by 3, while UMCS has a varying number.

4. Semester (Sommersemester): Alle Studierende in Lublin
4. Summer Semester: all students in Lublin

LUB_BA_002	Linguistics 2 Sprachwissenschaft 2	9 ECTS	h
Classes	Culture of the Polish language <i>Kultur der polnischen Sprache</i>	3	30
Classes	Confrontative grammar of Polish and German <i>Konfrontative Grammatik</i>	3	30
Classes	Introduction to translation studies <i>Sprachwissenschaftliche Grundlagen der Translationswissenschaft</i>	3	30
LUB_BA_003	Translation 1 Übersetzen/Dolmetschen 1	9 ECTS	
Classes	à vista interpreting <i>Avista (schriftl. Text übersetzen mündlich) poln.-dt. und umgekehrt</i>	3	30
Classes	Computer tools in the translator's work <i>Computerunterstütztes Übersetzen</i>	3	30
Classes	Consecutive interpreting <i>Konsekutivdolmetschen</i>	3	30
LUB_BA_004	Tourism as an area of linguistic activity Touristik als Bereich sprachlichen Handelns	9 ECTS	
Classes	Basics of intercultural communication <i>Grundlagen interkultureller Kommunikation</i>	3	30
Classes	Translation of tourist texts <i>Übersetzen im Bereich Touristik</i>	3	30
Classes	Introduction to historical tourism <i>Einführung in die Touristik mit Schwerpunkt Geschichte</i>	3	30
Elective subject/Schlüsselkompetenzen	Elective subject - foreign language course Schlüsselkompetenzen – zweite Fremdsprache	3 ECTS	30

TABLE 10. Joint programme of the 4th semester (completed by both groups in Lublin)

Source: own study

Moreover, the German list of credentials ends with a collective grade for a module (modules usually consist of three subjects), while the Polish USOS study system requires separate grades.

Similar administrative problems, although in this case slowly and gradually overcome thanks to a great deal of ingenuity and goodwill, can have a significant impact on the success or failure of an internationalised double degree programme. Even if both partner countries follow the Bologna process and may belong to more or less the

same cultural background, educational traditions will differ and the resulting differences in curricula will have to be effectively bridged. The time of the pandemic has unfortunately made the whole process more difficult, as it took longer to transfer and effectively implement assessment records into the partner system.

STUDIES IN PRACTICE

The final topic to be discussed in this paper is what the studies looked like in practice. In this area one can expect the greatest number of cultural differences, socially established patterns, ritualistic behaviours that have to be mastered and assimilated by foreign students. In addition, partner countries may have economic disparities which will result in significant differences in the cost of living and studying. Although studying in Germany is free, the compulsory student fees are quite high and paid for each semester of study. While Polish students were fortunately exempted from compulsory tuition fees for all semesters except the two held in Potsdam, due to the very expensive accommodation in Potsdam and the lack of external funding, there were cases of cancellation of studies on the Polish side. In subsequent years, effective solutions have been put in place to ensure full funding under the Erasmus+ programme, which should improve the situation and eliminate the financial gap experienced by Polish students. Students from Potsdam receive financial support for their stay at the UMCS from a grant of the German Academic Exchange Centre (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, DAAD*). Unfortunately, there is no Polish equivalent of similar support for Polish students at the BA level in the NAWA programme.

Since the double degree programme described in this paper assumes cooperation and co-creation of knowledge by both groups of students at the same time, it is important that adequate socialisation and team-building takes place during the first semester of study at the home universities separately. Fortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic did not have a detrimental effect on this aspect, as the socialisation and team building of Polish and German students was to take place online anyway. In contrast, what proved significant – to the surprise on both sides – was the choice of environments in which the students socialised. Both cultures have different digital habits and preferences (e.g. social media preferences, attitudes to Facebook, WhatsApp usage) and only a proper understanding of these “usage cultures” allowed for a smooth socialisation and team building process.

CONCLUSIONS

The conceptualisation, development and implementation of an internationalised double degree programme, as exemplified by the jointly run German-Polish Cultural and Translation Studies, is an impossible mission, even under non-pandemic conditions. Differences in ECTS credit allocation, socially acceptable student workload or the authorisation/accreditation process can be difficult to overcome and lead to premature failure and discouragement despite initial enthusiasm. Extreme circumstances can exacerbate these problems or, paradoxically, alleviate them, for example by reducing financial pressures on students. Such double degree programmes, while difficult to organise and administer, are certainly an extremely valuable element of the EHEA and as such should be treated with the utmost sensitivity.

Summary

Do joint/double degree agreements have a future?

DOROTA PIOTROWSKA, PHD, BENG, PROF. PŁ
Lodz University of Technology

The biographical note can be found in the *Introduction* on page 11.

The multidimensional analysis that is the subject of this publication has revealed the multifaceted processes and experiences of awarding joint and double degrees. The number of presented good practices perfectly reflects the wealth of experience of higher education in Poland and Europe. Beneficiaries of joint/double degree agreements argue with great conviction the added value of this axis of their activities as an important driving force in the improvement processes of Polish universities. However, the implementation of double/joint degree agreements is accompanied by many concerns and barriers. A good summary presenting the wide spectrum of emotions concerning double/joint degrees could be the SWOT analysis prepared by the participants of the consultation workshop “Challenges and good practices in the area of internationalisation of higher education”, which was organised by NAWA and IROs Forum in December 2020.

The great advantage of arguments on the part of strengths and opportunities demonstrates the wide range of opportunities that the implementation of double/joint degree agreements offers to universities. Legal restrictions are at the forefront of the risks. Workshop participants very strongly emphasised the need for changes and at least partial clarification in the legal provisions found in the Act of 20 July 2018 Law on Higher Education and Science (hereinafter referred to as the PoSW Act) and in the *Regulation of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of 27 September 2018 on studies*. Particular attention was paid to the need to introduce the possibility of recognising learning outcomes acquired in non-formal education and through informal learning, and to take into account in Polish legislation the specificity of other higher education systems in Europe. According to the workshop participants, such flexibility could significantly help in developing more advanced forms of cooperation with European universities.

STRENGTHS

- Increase in university prestige – stronger position
- Development of research and teaching staff in the administration
- Greater opportunities for students and researchers
- Increased mobility
- Development of university cooperation
- An advantage in recruitment
- Developing the offer in foreign languages
- Prestige of having graduated from two universities (reputation)
- Development of university infrastructure –Welcome points (centres)
- Something will always remain and serve to develop other innovative activities at the university in the field of education and international cooperation

OPPORTUNITIES

- Development and international cooperation
- International visibility
- Learning from others
- Developing staff competences
- Additional financing (joint, grants, paid studies – profit)
- Contacts of people involved in teaching translated into the scientific field

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of clear legal provisions supporting the development of double/joint degree agreements
- Blocking legal provisions
 - PoSW Act – Article 69 (3), Article 71 (1)
 - Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 27 September 2018 – Chapter 6
- A need for full knowledge of different educational systems in the world (unpleasant consequences)
- Danger of burning out in the absence of professionalism
- Greater administrative burden
- Organisational effort
- A small number of double degree students compared to traditional mobility

THREATS

- Omission of important matters in the agreements
- Legal environment
- Risk of ending after one cycle
- Lack of anticipated funding and working in vain

Source: own study

From the discussions that have taken place, it appears that specific recommendations from the Ministry of Education and Science for the development of both double or joint degree agreements as well as joint or double study programme agreements could be very helpful. Universities are, of course, aware of their autonomy. However, a “green light” allowing for certain solutions, clearly presented by the Ministry, could significantly encourage Polish universities to develop this form of cooperation. The dynamics of the processes occurring in this area in Europe clearly shows that developing joint or multiple qualifications and educational pathways may be one of the leading arguments for the internationalisation of higher education institutions and Polish universities should not be left behind in this process.

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES - THE CRADLE OF FUTURE DOUBLE/ JOINT DEGREES AND A CORNERSTONE OF THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS REGISTER

Over the past few years, the attention of the whole field of higher education in Europe has been absorbed by the European Universities initiative. It is intended to be based on the creation of international partnerships, which will be the universities of the future supporting European values and identity. Great plans and ambitions are being made to truly revolutionise European higher education in terms of quality and competitiveness.

TABLE 11. SWOT analysis prepared by the participants of the webinar “Double degrees in light of the new law”, 17.12.2020. Workshop organisers: NAWA and IROs Forum

Currently, the European initiative is going through a kind of testing phase of different models and solutions that can be adopted at the consortium level. One of the main themes of the various discussion forums is the opportunity and challenge of developing joint study programmes that include the potential of all partners in a university network. This will undoubtedly be a new dimension for universities in Europe. The vision of developing learning pathways that can lead to a qualification that is identified and recognised in many European universities could become a revolutionary axis for the redevelopment of the higher education system across Europe. At present, European University networks are faced with a huge number of organisational, administrative and legal differences. They are looking for possible ways of unifying regulations, on which they could build common solutions especially in the field of broadly understood educational cooperation. The basis for the network's operation is to be a jointly developed strategy for the development of the entire consortium by the partners. The idea of shaping joint, flexible study programmes, in which all partners in the consortium will be involved, will become a very important arena for inter-institutional learning and sharing of best pedagogical practices, as well as exchange of best staff. Undoubtedly, the experience gained by the various European networks in this area will be an excellent source of inspiration.

The vision of developing learning pathways that can lead to a qualification that is identified and recognised in many European universities could become a revolutionary axis for the redevelopment of the higher education system across Europe.

Developing mechanisms for creating common qualifications awarded by many universities in a given consortium may become an important contribution to the European Qualifications Register as a database of qualifications awarded at the supranational level. Such a register could function through cooperation between different institutions and stakeholders at the European level including governmental institutions, higher education institutions, employers' organisations, trade unions and citizens' organisations. It could be a **meta-model** of national qualification registers. The presence of a qualification in the European Integrated Register would mean that its credibility is confirmed by many authorised certification bodies and directly referenced to the European Qualifications Framework level. This is probably a very bold and futuristic

vision, but it could be crucial to one of the EU's most important missions, which is to increase economic and social cohesion and solidarity between Member States. Higher education and networks of European Universities can play an extremely important role in this mission.

**COMMON EUROPEAN
MICRO-CREDENTIALS
- A FUTURE VISION
OF A COMPETENT EUROPE**

Developing a system of micro-credentials at the higher education level is by far one of the most important challenges facing European universities today. This is closely related to the mission that each university has towards the socio-economic environment, including the need to become involved in supporting lifelong learning processes.

The university of the 21st century should be, above all, a place where the learner will be able to acquire, at any point in his/her life, competences that will help him/her to better adapt to the most current needs of the labour market and social environment. The modern university should use its authority to develop competences at the academic level not only for those who apply for full engineering, bachelor or master qualifications, but must be open to different kinds of non-formal and informal learning paths.

In order to achieve this goal, it is very important to be actively involved in the role of an institution confirming informal and non-formal learning. Many European universities have interesting experiences and effective solutions in this area. Polish universities could, within the framework of functioning international partnerships, take a lot of inspiration in this respect.

Globalisation processes transfer the need to develop shorter forms of education and smaller qualifications to a supra-national level. In times of great popularity of mobility of different social and age groups, it seems extremely important for universities to be open to developing smaller sets of competences, useful for a learner at a given moment of his/her professional and personal life and easily recognised in different European countries.

The co-creation of joint micro-credentials or partial credentials by European universities may become another great step towards building more advanced strategic partnerships and open up partner universities to activities not only focused on the teaching activity of the university, but also on jointly responding to the needs of not just the national, but the European socio-economic environment.

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CONTENT EXPERT:

Dorota Piotrowska, BEng, PhD
Professor of the Lodz University
of Technology

CONSULTATIONS:

Jan Andrzej Nicał

COORDINATION OF WORK ON THE PUBLICATION:

Magdalena Jarzyńska

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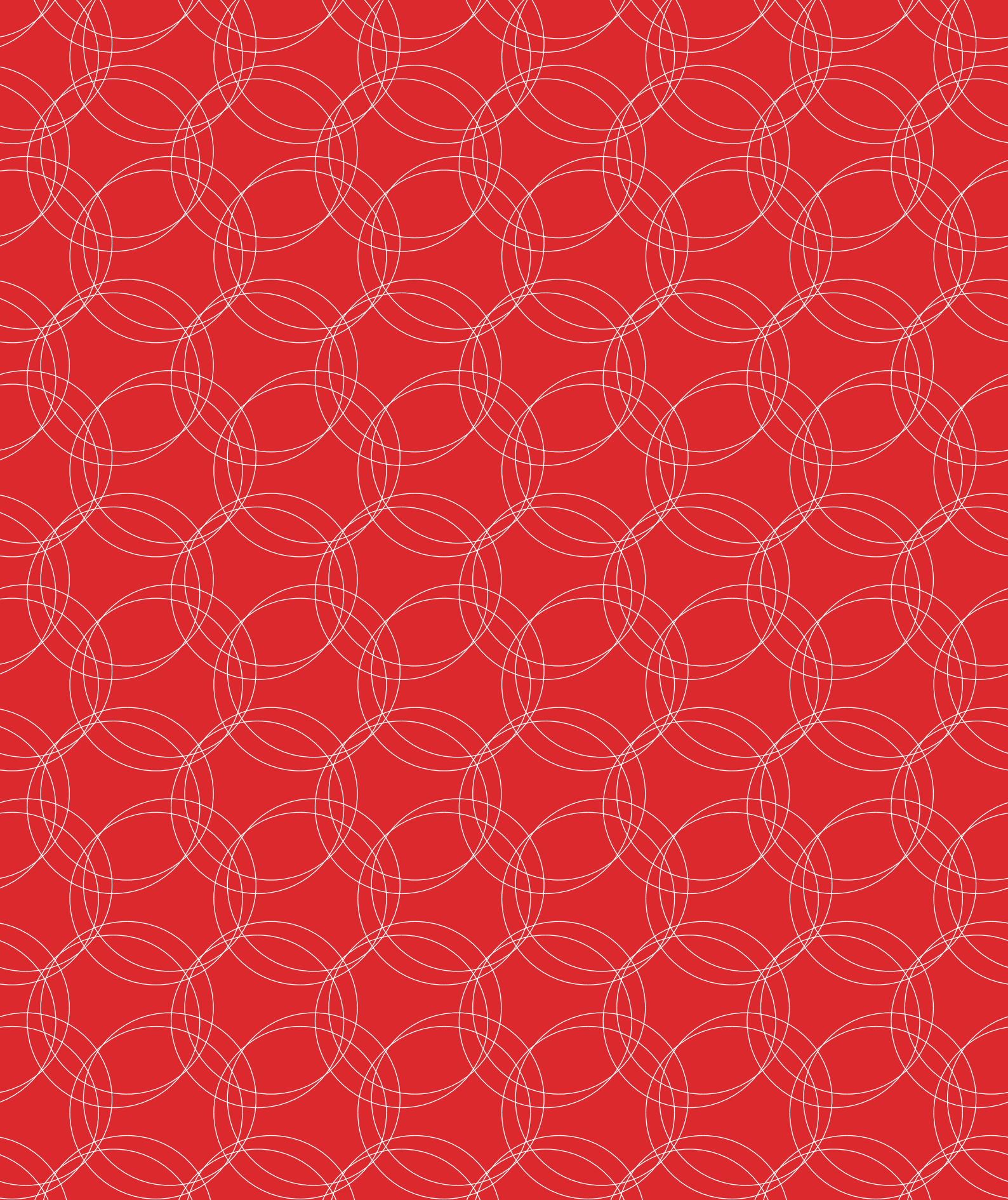
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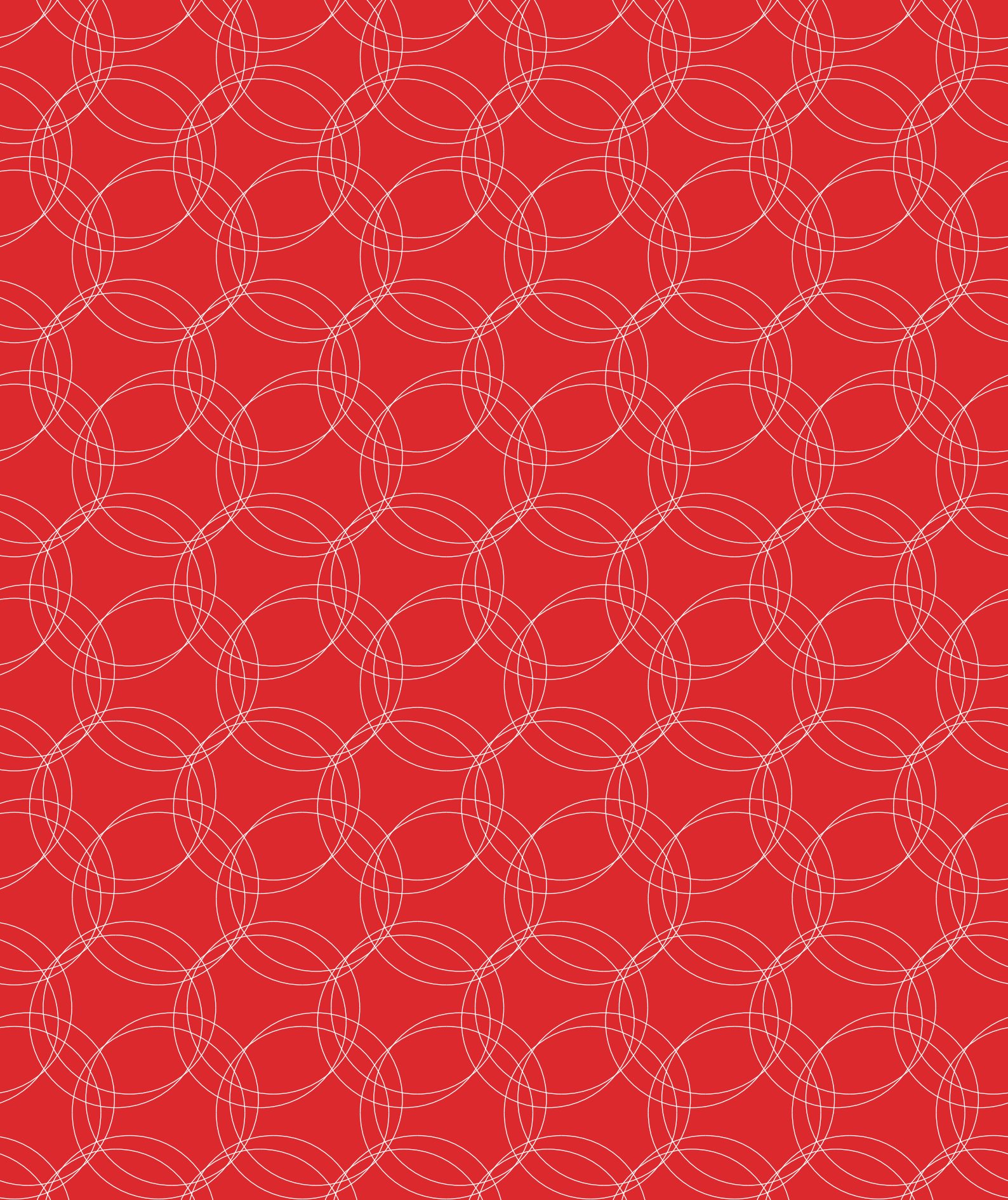
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