



General provisions on international joint degree programmes at the University of Helsinki: bachelor's and master's programmes

Introduction

International joint degree programmes supplement the education offered by the University of Helsinki. They enable the special expertise of several universities to be used, thus providing added value for the University of Helsinki and the relevant unit as well as for students. The partner universities must negotiate and design the degree programmes as independent entities that have commonly agreed learning outcomes and a shared curriculum. Participation in the programmes is based on profound familiarity and trust between the partners. The partners must allocate sufficient time to agree on the programme content, compare and harmonise their provisions concerning academic administration, and decide on matters of academic administration. Practice has shown that designing a programme and making the relevant decisions takes approximately two years.

When the partners have no previous experience in mutual education collaboration or student mobility, they should begin their cooperation by concluding a memorandum of understanding, which can specify the design of a joint degree programme as the objective of the cooperation as well as a timetable for the design process. A separate agreement must also be made on teacher and student exchange arrangements. Instructions related to agreements are available on Flamma at <https://flamma.helsinki.fi/en/HY274639>.

These provisions have been drawn up using the 2015 publication by Universities Finland UNIFI entitled *Ohjeet yliopistojen yhteistyönä järjestettävän tutkintokoulutuksen suunnitteluun ja toteutukseen* http://www.unifi.fi/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Yhteistutkinto-ohje_10092015.pdf.

Definition

The term *international joint degree programme* refers to all degree programmes organised by the University of Helsinki together with one or several universities abroad. Students who have completed such a degree programme will be awarded a degree from one or several universities and receive one or several diplomas.

Provisions for joint degree programmes

These provisions apply to both bachelor's and master's programmes. This decision supersedes the sections concerning master's programmes in Rector's Decision No 205/2011 (*General provisions for international joint degree programmes and joint supervision (cotutelle) agreements at the University of Helsinki*).

Decisions on new provisions concerning joint doctoral programmes and joint supervision (cotutelle) agreements will be made separately.

1. Establishment of a joint degree programme

The rector decides on the establishment of joint degree programmes at the proposal of a faculty. Such proposals must include at least the following information:

- Grounds for establishing the degree programme and a description of the significant added value the education cooperation will provide for the relevant field, the faculty and the University as well as for students
- Quality assurance in the programme
- Required resources: teaching and other staff (incl. an education planning officer) as well as other resources
- Maximum student intake
- The programme curriculum or its preliminary draft
- An agreement on education cooperation or a memorandum of understanding signed by the parties involved in the cooperation or another document signed by the partner universities that indicates their shared wish to establish the programme
- The academic and administrative coordinator of the programme at the University of Helsinki

Before submitting its proposal, the faculty must verify that each university participating in the joint degree programme is officially recognised or accredited by the appropriate authorities in its home country or its higher education system.

When applying for external funding for the planning or organisation of a new joint degree programme, the faculty must decide whether to participate in the project proposal. The dean of the faculty must sign the project proposal documents.

2. Steering group

Each joint degree programme must have a steering group for the preparation of decisions relating to the programme and for issues to be agreed collectively. The faculty dean must appoint one or more representatives of the University of Helsinki to the steering group. Where possible, the steering group is also to include student representatives. The duties and functions of the steering group must be defined in the agreement on the programme.

3. Curriculum

The universities involved in a joint degree programme must negotiate and agree on the programme curriculum. The steering group of the programme must submit the curriculum for approval to the faculty council of the faculty coordinating the programme at the University of Helsinki.

The curriculum of a joint degree programme must essentially comply with the provisions and principles concerning curricula at the University of Helsinki.

4. Admissions

4.1 Admissions criteria

The admissions criteria must be negotiated and agreed upon with the universities participating in the programme. The steering group of the programme must submit the admissions criteria for decision to the faculty council of the faculty responsible for the programme at the University of Helsinki. The admissions criteria must not significantly deviate from the admissions guidelines of the University of Helsinki and the relevant faculty.

The schedule for applications and admissions to a joint degree programme can deviate from the schedules otherwise followed at the University of Helsinki.

4.2 Admissions procedure

The agreement on each joint degree programme must outline whether student admissions are centralised or decentralised.

In decentralised admissions, each university must either internally or externally administer the admissions procedure for the places it offers, independently process and assess the applications, and decide on its student admissions according to its provisions.

In centralised admissions, all universities involved in a joint degree programme must together assess the applications for the programme. The steering group of the programme must prepare a proposal for the students to be admitted to the University of Helsinki. The right to complete a degree is to be granted by the faculty council, a body appointed by it or the dean, as defined by the faculty council.

5. Student enrolment and registration

A student pursuing a degree in a joint degree programme at the University of Helsinki must enrol at the University after having been granted the right to complete a degree or no later than at the beginning of the term in which he or she studies at the University.

To be able to complete studies at the University of Helsinki, the student must be registered for attendance. Once enrolled at the University of Helsinki, a student in a joint degree programme must register for attendance, or for non-attendance for those terms during which he or she is completing degree studies in a university other than the University of Helsinki.

6. Assessment of completed studies

Each agreement on a joint degree programme must include provisions on the assessment of studies included in a joint degree.

If the partner universities use different grading scales, provisions on the conversion of grades between the systems can be included in the programme curriculum. Otherwise, the grade for studies included in a joint degree programme will be entered into the student records of the University of Helsinki only if the studies were assessed on the same grading scale as that used at the University of Helsinki (0–5 or pass/fail).

7. Examination and grading of theses

Each agreement on a joint degree programme must include provisions on the relevant thesis, its inclusion in a degree at the University of Helsinki and its grading. The thesis must meet the minimum requirements of all universities granting the degree.

8. Maximum amount of studies accepted for recognition

The maximum amount of studies accepted for recognition is not limited if the studies (incl. a thesis) are included in the curriculum of a joint degree programme and completed at a partner university. The limitations only concern studies that are not included in the curriculum of the joint degree programme as well as studies that have been or will be completed at universities not involved in the programme.

9. Awarding of degrees

Students who have completed a joint degree programme will be awarded either one degree by one partner university or several degrees by the universities at which the students have completed studies included in the programme.

10. Degree diploma

Students enrolled in a joint degree programme who complete their degrees at the University of Helsinki will receive an English-language diploma as well as an identical Finnish- or Swedish-language diploma.

Enclosed will be a diploma supplement indicating that the degree has been awarded in a joint degree programme and outlining the structure of the programme.

An agreement on a joint degree programme can specify that graduates from the programme receive a diploma issued collaboratively by several universities. The diploma must indicate at least the title of the degree programme as well as the official degree diplomas and titles awarded. Collaboratively issued diplomas are not official diplomas.

11. Student mobility included in joint degree programmes

A compulsory and/or voluntary period of student mobility that may be included in a joint degree programme as well as the scope, form and funding of such mobility periods must be determined in the programme agreement and decided in the curriculum.

The University of Helsinki's International Exchange Services must be consulted in the case of mobility arrangements.

12. Tuition fee

The University of Helsinki charges tuition fees to students who study in bachelor's and master's programmes offered in a language other than Finnish or Swedish as well as to students who study in multilingual programmes and complete their degree in English. Tuition fees also apply to students in joint degree programmes.

Tuition fees are charged to students who are not citizens of an EU or EEA (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) country or Switzerland. Tuition fees are not charged to international students who hold a status A, P or P-EU residence permit. Also exempted are the family members (i.e., spouses and underage children) of individuals who are citizens of an EU or EEA country or Switzerland as well as the family members of those with one of the above residence permits.

The principles of tuition fees for joint degree programmes are determined in the relevant programme agreement. The recommendation is for the tuition fee to be the same regardless of the university at which the students are studying. In any event, students are only liable to pay one tuition fee at a time.

The rector decides on tuition fees for joint degree programmes, which may differ from other tuition fees charged by the University of Helsinki. A proposal on the tuition fee must be included in the faculty proposal concerning the establishment of a degree programme.

13. Quality and quality assurance

Joint degree programmes fall under the respective quality assurance systems of the participating universities. Agreements on joint degree programmes may outline additional ways to implement quality assurance and collect student feedback in the programme.

The compatibility of the partner universities' level of research and education with that of the University of Helsinki will be verified upon establishing a joint degree programme.

15. Funding and resources

The relevant faculty council must ensure that there are sufficient funds and resources to implement the programme upon the approval of the curriculum. If external funding is sought for the planning or implementation of the joint degree programme, the faculty must ensure upon application that the implementation costs can be covered by the participating unit's budget funding once the external funding period expires.

16. Agreements on joint degree programmes

An agreement must be concluded for all joint degree programmes. At the University of Helsinki, agreements on international joint degree programmes are signed first by the dean of the faculty responsible for the programme at the University of Helsinki and then by the rector.

The education planning officer designated to the joint degree programme is responsible for presenting the programme agreement to the dean, while Strategic Services for Teaching (or its equivalent) is responsible for presenting the programme agreement to the rector.

It is recommended that each joint degree programme agreement provide for at least the following:

- Objectives of the programme
- Parties implementing the programme
- Composition, duties and practices of the programme steering group
- Admissions procedure and criteria, student quotas assigned for each university and, where necessary, the definition of the students' home university
- Criteria for awarding degree(s)
- Degree titles
- Diploma-awarding process, including possible joint diplomas and their content

- Division of labour and financial responsibilities in the implementation of the programme
- The status of students at the partner universities
- Student and teacher mobility as well as related practical arrangements and funding
- The definition of provisions related to studies and studying when students complete studies and/or a degree at several universities simultaneously (such as appeals against application and admissions decisions, provisions on the duration of studies and disciplinary measures)
- Grading criteria and procedures, grading scales and possible grade conversions
- Duration and termination of the agreement

Strategic Services for Teaching provides advice for the conclusion of agreements. Agreements can also be prepared using the *Guidelines on Joint Programme Agreements* at <https://wiki.helsinki.fi/x/kejTAQ>. Sufficient time must be provided to University Services for preparing agreements and commenting on draft versions.

International Exchange Services provides advice on memoranda of understanding and mobility agreements.

Proposal To issue the aforementioned general provisions on joint degree programmes at the University of Helsinki.

Decision As proposed

Rector

Jukka Kola

Adviser

Esko Koponen

This document has been digitally signed in the records and document management system of the University of Helsinki.