



EUA

European University Association

Developing Joint Masters Programmes for Europe: Lessons from the EUA Joint Masters Project

BFUG Workshop:
Joint Degrees - Further Development

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Presentation Overview

- Importance of joint degrees for Europe
- Background to EUA's Joint Masters Project
- Project overview - objectives, methodology & activities
- Key issues and findings

Introduction

Model for European higher education area

■ Who benefits?

- ✓ Students
- ✓ Academics
- ✓ Institutions
- ✓ Europe

■ Political importance of issue?

- ✓ Bologna - Prague - Berlin Declarations
- ✓ Erasmus Mundus launch

Project background

EUA's interest in Joint Masters programmes:

- To learn about “European dimension” in action
- Reflect on stand-alone “Master” degrees
- To help improve inter-university cooperation since JM require:
 - transparency and agreement on degree structures
 - student and professor mobility
 - joint curriculum development
 - proper use of ECTS
 - language policy

Project background II

EUA's previous knowledge on the issue:

- Before 2002, little research into actual joint programmes & masters degrees in Europe
- *EUA Survey on Master Degrees and Joint Degrees in Europe*, Christian Tauch and Andrejs Rauhvargers (Sept 2002)
 - ✓ Diversity of Master degree structures
 - ✓ Legal recognition difficulties for joint degrees
 - ✓ Bilateral programmes more frequent than joint programmes
 - ✓ Joint programmes more common at Master and Doctoral levels

EUA Joint Masters Project: Project Overview

Main goals of the project:

- Formulate recommendations for future joint programmes, and to help ensure sustainability of existing programmes
- Indicate structural changes needed in Europe/institutions to make Joint Masters a permanent feature of the EHEA
- Identify future inter-institutional cooperation challenges

Project Actions I

- Selection of 11 existing programmes
 - 100 universities in 21 countries
 - Diverse profiles: (relative) geographic spread, disciplinary variety

- Main themes:
 - Quality assurance and recognition
 - Student experience and mobility
 - Course integration and sustainability

Project Actions II

- Research & analysis
 - Internal Network Meetings (self-evaluation)
 - Qualitative Research Project
 - Inter-Network Meeting

- EUA Cluj Conference, October 2003 (first presentation of findings)

Key unresolved issues: Definitions and structures

- Variety of network and programme structures = no single model
- No common understanding of Master degree
 - ✓ Learning outcomes: different interpretations of cycles
 - ✓ Purpose: self-standing vs. integrated; academic vs. professional
 - ✓ Length: tendency of 60-75 ECTS
- Development driven by existing research partnerships, innovative approaches to curricula, and practical considerations
- Challenges: maintain space for positive diversity, improve understanding for recognition

Key unresolved issues: Funding frameworks and sustainability

- Costly to develop and sustain programmes
- Exist within incompatible national funding frameworks - tuition fees, portability of grants/loans
- Limited resources distributed across institutions in widely differing socio-economic contexts (EU15 - Bologna)
 - ✓ Incentives needed to promote geographic inclusion
- Institutional policy/strategy - crucial dimension for long-term success
 - ✓ Incentives needed for institutional involvement (EM not sufficient)

Key unresolved issues: Recognition

- Several months after Berlin “Ministers agree to engage at the national level to remove legal obstacles...to [awarding] joint degrees”
- Legal recognition obstacles continue to exist: multiple interim solutions adopted
 - ✓ Most common: one national degree + joint certificate
 - ✓ Also, double degrees, and reliance on labour market recognition
- Action at European level - support for ENIC/NARIC proposal
- More importantly, need general shift in approach to recognition
- Recognition linked to eligibility for national funding
- Networks want European dimension recognised
- Diploma supplement: not used

Key unresolved issues: Quality Assurance I

- Internal QA in programmes is developing and responsive to students and stakeholders
- Common current practice of external QA is to satisfy one national system (usually UK):
 - ✓ Not necessarily tailored to logic of joint programmes
 - ✓ Imposing national cultural approach to « European » programme
 - ✓ Does not help integrate programmes in core activities of institutions
- How can situation be improved?

Note: High visibility of joint degrees on global scale (EM)

Key unresolved issues: Quality Assurance II

- Essential feature: Trust between academics, departments, institutions
 - ✓ Confidence needs to be encouraged, supported, and developed
- Given:
 - ✓ paramount importance of institutional support for programme sustainability;
 - ✓ agreement in Berlin “primary responsibility for QA at higher education lies with each institution itself”; and,
 - ✓ EUA’s experience with QC and IEP - developing internal QA
- EUA exploring feasibility to develop internal QA of joint European degrees

Further information

- Joint Masters Project report: publication June 2004 (on EUA website mid May - www.eua.be)
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