Freie Universität Berlin
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Joint & Double Degree Programs

Lessons learned based on

- experience of Freie Universität Berlin
- empirical research conducted by FUB together with Institute of International Education, and by other institutions
A Global Trend

„Dual-Degree Programs Are Gathering Steam“
New York Times, March 2011

„A future trend will be towards the establishment of institutional partnerships and joint-degree programs that will attract students and researchers alike to the combined strengths of multiple universities working in partnership.“
The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education: „Borderless 2011: Perspectives on the Future“
Definition?

“A review of the literature, university web pages, survey reports and research articles shows a plethora of terms used to describe international collaborative programs, such as double and joint degrees. These terms include: double, multiple, tri-national, joint, integrated, collaborative, international, consecutive, concurrent, co-tutelle, overlapping, conjoint, parallel, simultaneous, and common degrees.

They mean different things to different people within and across countries, thereby, causing mass confusion about the real meaning and use of these terms….”

International joint or double degree programs are study programs collaboratively offered by two (or more) HEIs located in different countries. They typically feature a jointly developed / integrated curriculum and agreed upon credit recognition. Students typically study at the two (or more) partnering HEIs.

**Joint Degree Programs**: Upon completion of the study program students are awarded a single degree certificate issued and signed jointly by all institutions involved in the program.

**Double Degree Programs**: Upon completion of the study program students receive degree certificates issued separately by each of the institutions involved in the program.

Source: Joint and Double Degree Programs in the Global Context, IIE & FUB, September 2011
Collaborative Degree Programs at FUB

Double degree programs, Bachelor level:

- Social Sciences, with Sciences Po Paris
- Literature & Cultural Studies, with Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris

„Integrated programs“, Bachelor level:

- Integrated China-Studies, with Zhejiang University, China
- Integrated Korea-Studies, with Ewha Woman's University; Sogang University; Yonsei University, Korea
- Integrated Japan-Studies, with International Christian University (ICU) Tokio, Japan
Collaborative Degree Programs at FUB

Double degree programs at Master’s level

- Political Science / Affaires Internationales / Affaires Européennes, with Sciences Po Paris, France
- Environmental Earth Science, with Nanjing University, China
- Global Communication and International Journalism, with St. Petersburg State University, Russia
- Physics, with École Polytechnique, Paris, France
- Public Policy and Management, École des Hautes Etudes Commerciales (HEC) Paris, France
Developing Collaborative Degree Programs

Some common features & experiences with collaborative degree programs:

- Most are bottom-up initiatives, based on faculty interest and contacts
- More often developed on the graduate level (MA)
- Most are designed as double degree programs (joint degree programs seem to be often legally more complicated in some countries)
- Most are developed with already existing partner institutions, based on previous cooperation – not as a first step of cooperation!
- Most require the involvement of several
  - Faculty members and
  - Administrative units within the institution
Important Questions  (from very beginning!)

- What are the (national or institutional) legal frameworks and regulations? Can a joint or double degree be at all awarded?
- Is there a complementarity of curricula & modules?
- Do academic calenders fit?
- What is the language of tuition - but also the language of administration?
- What are the (additional) short/long term costs of launching & running the program?
- How is the process of credit recognition organized?
- How is the process of quality assurance & accreditation organized?
- Are tuition fees addressed?
- Is there a unit that guides the development of such programs?
- Which students is the program aimed at and will there be enough demand?
- Are the admission requirements sufficiently addressed?
Greatest Challenges

„Generally, sustainability is a priority item in [collaborative programs] which is obviously disastrously underestimated or even ignored.“

Sustainability & Strategy

- Collaborative degree programs need long-term institutional commitment and support just as much as the backing and engagement of individual professors.

- Institutions should have a clear policy on such programs, ideally embedded in an institutional strategy, and identify a unit that can guide faculty or institutes in developing them.

- Such programs always need additional resources: Is the institution able and willing to provide them (also in case external seed funding-seizes to flow)?

- What is the value added that the program provides to students and to the institutions involved?

- Has the institution any particular marketing or recruitment measures in place for the program? And will there be enough participants?
Motivations and Benefits

- Offering students attractive international programs and unique study conditions
- Advancing campus internationalization / attracting more international students
- Broadening educational offerings through use of synergies
- Improving competitiveness by teaming up with partner institutions
- Raising international visibility & prestige of institution
- Fostering collaboration with partner faculty, leading also to new research cooperation
Thank you!