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Joint and Double Degrees at Master's and Doctoral Level with Foreign Universities



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Joint and Double Degrees at Master's and Doctoral Level with Foreign Universities

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¹ Rules Owner: Head(s) of Responsibility Centre(s) in which the rules functions.

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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY POLICY REGARDING JOINT AND DOUBLE DEGREES AT MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL LEVEL WITH FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES

Approved by University Council on 3 December 2012

1. Stellenbosch University (SU) may confer joint and double degrees at Master's and Doctoral level with foreign (international) universities.
2. A joint degree results from international academic collaboration between two or more institutions on a jointly defined and entirely shared study programme leading to a joint degree. This means that all partner institutions are responsible for the entire programme and not just their own separate parts.¹
3. A double degree results from international academic collaboration between two or more institutions on a jointly defined, but partially shared study programme with some areas being specific to each of the partners while other areas are shared and lead to a double degree. This means that partner institutions are responsible for their own separate parts (the parts are mutually recognized by the partners) but have a shared responsibility in respect of those parts of the programme which are shared.
4. The outcomes of both joint and double degrees are single qualifications because they cannot be awarded independently of one another. The fundamental difference with single degrees (awarded by only one institution) therefore lies in the shared nature of the jointly defined study programme (i.e., the "deed") leading to a joint or double degree and therefore also the depth of the collaboration. Joint degrees lie at one end of a continuum indicating the highest level of collaboration, double degrees at a further point on the continuum and towards the other end of the continuum, single degrees (awarded by only one institution) which for example, may have included credit transfer from a partner institution through an exchange programme.
5. As a guideline, joint degrees are normally more applicable to research degree (PhDs and research Master's) programmes.
6. Double degrees are normally more applicable to programmes where there are different coursework components offered by the partners (for which there is mutual credit recognition) contributing to the whole and where the thesis constitutes the shared component through joint thesis supervision and joint examination. For a double degree to be awarded by Stellenbosch University, a candidate must have completed a minimum of 50% percent of the total South African credits for the degree at Stellenbosch University and then SU can recognise up to a maximum of 50% credits done at the partner university, leading to a total number of credits acquired for the degree. This would be applicable to Master's level degrees.

¹ <http://www.uib.no/education/collaboration/uibs-involvement-in-joint-degrees-and-programmes/central-concepts-and-definitions>, 2010

7. The manner in which joint and double degrees can be certified (the resultant diploma/s) is generally dictated by the national and legal requirements in each country. Where a country's legislation allows for the award of joint degrees, it is useful to follow the guidelines offered by the Lisbon Convention² regarding certification because they allow for flexibility across incompatible national systems and they protect the national recognition of the candidate's qualification. These guidelines also apply to the certification of double degrees.
8. Stellenbosch University has a preference for two or more national diplomas³ (= degree certificates) issued officially as the only attestation of the joint or double qualification in question with the proviso that each degree certificate must refer to the joint nature of the qualification and have an inscription on each that indicates that the qualification is conferred in conjunction with another institution(s) and together represent the one single deed.
9. A diploma supplement is a document which accompanies joint or double degree diplomas and explains the nature of the joint programme which consists of a single deed (the totality of the learning and assessment experience throughout the whole process) and describes the credit and grading system in place.
10. The following conditions apply to the awarding of joint and double degrees:
 - 10.1. It is only awarded at Master's and Doctoral level.
 - 10.2. It is only awarded with universities outside South Africa.
 - 10.3. It is only awarded within bilateral agreements (i.e. between SU and a foreign university or between SU and a consortium of universities).
 - 10.4. It can be awarded in any discipline that is offered by both SU and the foreign university.
 - 10.5. When decisions are to be taken by SU with which foreign university joint or double degrees can be offered, the following six requirements as a whole must be met in a substantial manner:
 - 10.5.1. it must fit in within the vision and mission of SU and contribute to attaining the goals of SU;
 - 10.5.2. SU must benefit from the cooperation with the particular foreign university;
 - 10.5.3. the foreign university must have the appropriate expertise in the research area in which the joint or double degree can be awarded;
 - 10.5.4. SU and the partner institution(s) must have the appropriate expertise in the research area in which the joint or double degree can be awarded;

² The Lisbon Convention states that:

"A joint degree may be issued as:

- a) a joint diploma in addition to one or more national diplomas,
- b) a joint diploma issued by the institutions offering the study programme in question without being accompanied by any national diploma,
- c) one or more national diplomas issued officially as the only attestation of joint qualification in question."

(*Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees adopted by the Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region* on 9 June 2004, URL:

<https://wcd.coe.int/wcd/ViewDoc.jsp?id=836481&Site=COE>)

³ The term "national diploma" used in this document in accordance with international practice refers to the paper document or certificate detailing the qualification which has been awarded. It should not be confused with the term "National Diploma" which in the South African context refers to a specific qualification at a particular level on our National Qualification Framework.

- 10.5.5. there must be reasonable prospects of student movement to and from SU and the foreign university;
- 10.5.6. the number of agreements for the awarding of joint and double degrees are strictly limited to agreements which have reasonable prospects of sustainability and active functioning based on a proven track record of collaboration between the institutions.
- 10.6. It is only awarded on the basis of an agreement to be concluded at institutional level and such an agreement must include or refer to a memorandum of understanding for the awarding of joint or double degrees. This memorandum of understanding must include at least the following items and stipulations:
 - 10.6.1. full compliance with all the national and institutional regulations for the awarding of Master's or Doctoral degrees of both SU and the foreign university;
 - 10.6.2. full compliance with the quality assurance requirements and procedures of both SU and the foreign university;
 - 10.6.3. a liaison mechanism for coordinating the master's/doctorate degree between appointed representatives from the different institutions;
 - 10.6.4. the requirements and procedures for the recruitment, admission, selection, and registration of students;
 - a) in the case of joint and double degrees the rule that students are normally not allowed to be enrolled simultaneously at more than one university, will be waived per special Senate decision.
 - 10.6.5. regulations regarding the periods of residency at SU and the foreign university;
 - 10.6.6. supervision;
 - 10.6.7. examination;
 - a) the composition and functioning of the joint examination committee;
 - b) the recommendation of the joint examination committee applies to all institutions (neither SU or the other institution(s) may afterwards award the relevant degree if the joint examination committee did not recommend it).
 - 10.6.8. procedures for the handling of student complaints;
 - 10.6.9. disciplinary measures;
 - 10.6.10. intellectual property;
 - 10.6.11. certification and diploma supplement information;
 - 10.6.12. graduation ceremony;
 - a) successful candidates receive their degrees at a ceremony of either SU or the foreign university;
- 10.7. Agreements for the conferring of joint and double Master's or Doctoral degrees must be recommended by the Academic Planning Committee and be approved by the Senate before being institutionally validated.
- 10.8. Candidates for a joint/double PhD programme would normally enrol for a joint/double PhD degree from the outset. However, if there is sufficient imperative on the basis of ongoing collaboration and/or co-operation to transfer during the course of studies from single enrolment at one of the partner institutions to a joint/double PhD degree, the minimum period of simultaneous registration at both partner institutions of 2 further years will be required and must take into account any other rules binding the candidate at both institutions. Under such

circumstances, the candidate will also have to go through the other partner university's admission process.

- 10.9. SU normally counts students who are enrolled for joint and double degrees as full Master's or Doctoral degree students of the University in the case of research Master's and Doctoral degrees and reports this number in terms of HEMIS to the Department of Education. Exceptions may be made in the case of a coursework Master's degree where for example, subsidy might only be claimed for those modules taken at SU but the thesis might be claimed for in full, if completed under joint supervision.
- 10.10. SU students must be enrolled for the minimum period of time required for a Master's (one year) or Doctoral (two years) degree

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