

Joint Degrees and Erasmus Mundus

State of play report for the 2023 Erasmus
Mundus Annual Conference “Boosting the
potential of Joint Degrees in Erasmus
Mundus Joint Master Programmes”



Funded by
the European Union



Funded by
the European Union

Authors

Virginia Zalunardo and Inés Fernández-Figares, NTT DATA, for the Erasmus Mundus Support Initiative

To cite this document

European Commission, European Education and Culture Executive Agency, Erasmus Mundus Support Initiative, Zalunardo, V., & Fernández-Figares, I. (2023). *Awarding Joint Degrees. State of play report for the 2023 Erasmus Mundus Annual Conference “Boosting the potential of Joint Degrees in Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programmes”*. <https://erasmus-networks.ec.europa.eu/stateofplayjointdegreesem>

The Erasmus Mundus Support Initiative (EMSI) is an initiative of the European Commission, funded by the Erasmus+ programme (2021-2027) and operated by a consortium of four organisations, under a service contract with the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

This document has been prepared for the European Commission however it reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



GLOSSARY

CoP	Community of Practice
DG EAC	Directorate-General Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission
EACEA	European Education and Culture Executive Agency
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EM	Erasmus Mundus
EM-ACT	Erasmus Mundus Association for Consortia cooperation
EMA	Erasmus Mundus Association
EMDM	Erasmus Mundus Design Measures
EMJM	Erasmus Mundus Joint Master
EMSI	Erasmus Mundus Support Initiative
ENIC-NARIC	European Network of Information Centers in the European Region – National Academic Recognition Information Centers in the European Union
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
EU	European Union
HEI	Higher Education Institution
JD	Joint Degree
JP	Joint Programme
LOSU	Spain's Organic Law of the University System
UHR	Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. CONTEXT.....	5
2.1. What is a joint degree?	5
2.2. Legal landscape of Joint Degrees.....	5
2.3. Current implementation of joint degrees	7
3. ADDED VALUE OF JOINT DEGREES	9
3.1. A clear sign of ‘jointness’.....	9
3.2. A deeper form of internationalisation.....	10
3.3. A system of easily readable and comparable degrees.....	10
3.4. More streamlined administrative procedures.....	11
3.5. Addressing issues of double/multiple degrees	11
4. CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES	12
4.1. Legislative barriers	12
4.2. Institutional barriers.....	21
4.3. Recognition barriers.....	27
5. CONCLUSION	30
5.1. Key takeaways.....	30
5.2. The future of joint degrees.....	30
REFERENCES.....	32
ANNEX.....	35
Annex I – Institutional journey to establish a Joint Degree	35
Annex II – List of identified experts.....	36

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Legal landscape of Joint Degrees at Master level in the EHEA.....	7
Figure 2 Types of degrees offered by EM Masters implemented during the years 2014-2020.....	8
Figure 3 Overview of the advantages of awarding joint degrees for each stakeholder.....	9
Figure 4 Overview of the identified challenges and ideas for each stakeholder to address them.....	12
Figure 5 Overview of institutional journey to establish a Joint Degree	35

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Overview of the findings presented in the report.....	2
Table 2 List of identified experts.....	36

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- (1) The present state-of-play report has been developed to guide the discussions of the upcoming annual conference '**Boosting the potential of Joint Degrees in Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programmes**', which will be held in Brussels (Belgium) on November 30th and December 1st, 2023.
- (2) The report is based on (i) the existing body of research on joint degrees (JDs) in the European context, including scientific and stakeholders' reports and publications; (ii) insights from a survey carried by the Erasmus Mundus Association for Consortia cooperation (EM-ACT); and (iii) in-depth interviews with three experts in the field.
- (3) The report first offers an overview of the **current legal landscape and implementation of JDs** in the European Higher Education Area. Key takeaways include:
 - (a) Joint programmes (JP) are integrated curricula coordinated and offered jointly by different Higher Education Institutions (HEI) which lead to the award of either double/multiple degrees or a joint degree (JD). In contrast to double/multiple degrees, joint degrees are a single document awarded by HEIs offering a JP and nationally recognised as the award of the JP.
 - (b) Nowadays, all European Union (EU) countries allow the award of JDs at Master level. However, significant variations in national legislations persist. While some countries have strict regulatory frameworks for issuing JDs, others provide more freedom to HEIs.
 - (c) Based on a sample of Erasmus Mundus Master projects surveyed by EACEA (2020), 55% of these Masters implemented from 2014 to 2020 offer either JDs or degrees with a joint component, while the remaining 45% grant double or multiple degrees. The proportion of programmes awarding JDs varies across programme countries, as well as study fields.
- (4) This overview is followed by the analysis of **advantages JDs might have for different stakeholders** including HEIs, national authorities, the EU itself, students, and the labour market. JDs appear to (i) indicate a higher level of jointness among consortia; (ii) enable a deeper form of internationalisation between HEIs as well as between countries; (iii) provide employers with a system of easily readable and comparable degrees; (iv) allow for more streamlined administrative processes within institutions; and (v) help address the issues related to offering double/multiple degrees. These benefits are however not always recognised by these stakeholders, who tend to favour other degree arrangements, such as the double/multiple degrees.
- (5) The main findings of the report are then presented in the form of six factsheets, each describing a challenge faced by consortia along with ideas up for discussion that could help address the challenge at institutional, national and/or European levels. These factsheets are divided into **three categories**: legislative, institutional, and recognition.
- (6) We present a total of **twenty-four recommendations** to address the **six major challenges** encountered by consortia when implementing JDs. These are summarised below:

Table 1 Overview of the findings presented in the report

TYPE	CHALLENGE	IDEAS UP FOR DISCUSSION		
		HEIs	National Authorities	European Union
Legislative barriers	Incompatible legal requirements at national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the different national legislative frameworks • Explore other types of joint degree arrangements • Use the Diploma Supplement to address the numerous requirements for the award of JDs • Continue lobbying and raising awareness 	Review and adapt legislation to accommodate the smooth implementation of JDs	Support countries' review and adaptation of their legislation
	Lack of guidance for HEIs		Provide guidelines on national legislation linked to JDs	
	Undefined and conflicting terminology	Clarify key terminology within the Consortium	Define terminology in the national legislation	Further define and distinguish key terminology
Institutional barriers	Incompatible institutional regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow flexibility to JPs with regards to general institutional regulations, OR • Develop a dedicated institutional regulation on JPs 		Facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices among consortia
	Institutional resistance to JDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse and understand the strategic added value of JDs • Pool resources and streamline processes • Develop a timeline for achieving specific targets to award JDs • Ensure people and institutional commitment and motivation 	Incentivise HEIs to award JDs (e.g., funding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentivise HEIs to award JDs (e.g., funding) • Provide support and advice to HEIs • Develop tools tailored to HEIs needs
Recognition barriers	Employers & students lack of knowledge or recognition of JDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the importance of a Diploma Supplement to students and employers • Promote JDs to students and employers at institutional level 		Promote JDs to students and employers at EU level

1. INTRODUCTION

More than 20 years ago, 29 countries came together and signed the Bologna declaration – a voluntary inter-governmental process aimed at increasing coherence across higher education systems in Europe. Since then, the European Union (EU) has provided continuous support to the Bologna signatory countries through a number of policy-driven initiatives and cooperation programmes. Among these initiatives is the **Erasmus Mundus (EM) action**, launched in 2004 with the goal of fostering excellence and promoting worldwide internationalisation of higher education institutions (HEIs). The programme aimed to achieve this by supporting innovative, forward-looking study programmes at Master level.

Over the past 20 years, the EM action has largely contributed to enhancing transnational higher education cooperation in Europe, providing a fertile ground for the development of Erasmus Mundus Masters¹, which lead to the award of double/multiple degrees or a joint degree (JD). The EU has actively encouraged the adoption of JDs among consortia, considering them a more advanced form of cooperation and jointness between partner HEIs. However, institutions delivering these Joint Programmes (JP)² face **persistent challenges due to incompatibilities** within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), particularly when it comes to awarding JDs. These challenges mainly stem from conflicting national legislations as well as institutional limitations. Recognising the significance of addressing these barriers, the Council Recommendation adopted on the 5th of April 2022 highlighted the need for further efforts and adjustments at national, regional, and institutional levels to overcome these challenges to the development of JPs and JDs (Council of Europe, 2022).

This state-of-play report consolidates potential solutions to widespread challenges that are currently hindering the implementation of JDs. The aim is to provide context and support expert-level discussions among participants during the annual conference ‘**Boosting the potential of Joint Degrees in Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programmes**’ held in Brussels (Belgium) the 30th of November and 1st of December 2023. During the event, attendants will be encouraged to share good practices and identified solutions to overcome the remaining (and well-known) challenges to awarding JDs.

Specifically, this report offers an overview of the current implementation of JDs in the EHEA while **summarising and presenting** the thus far **identified solutions and best practices** to tackle recurrent challenges faced by different stakeholders. It seeks to provide EM consortia, national authorities and European institutions, with potential solutions to eliminate or reduce barriers encountered when issuing JDs, therefore facilitating their implementation. By providing a direct problem-solution link, this report aims to enable a more tailored approach to solve specific issues related to awarding JDs.

From a methodological perspective, the first step in preparing this state-of-play report involved conducting extensive desk research to gain insights into the current implementation of JDs by stakeholders at various levels, including national, European and international consortia. Complementing these findings, the results of a survey conducted by the Erasmus Mundus Association for Consortia cooperation (EM-ACT)³ provided a better understanding of the challenges encountered by HEIs when implementing JDs, and the strategies they employ to address these. In addition to the desk research and survey analysis, two interviews with key representatives were conducted to collect

¹ Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters are joint programmes at master level, designed and delivered by an international partnership of at least three HEIs from three different countries, of which at least two are EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme. (August 2023). <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/opportunities/opportunities-for-organisations/cooperation-among-organisations-and-institutions/erasmus-mundus-joint-masters>

² Joint Programmes are integrated curricula coordinated and offered jointly by different HEIs, leading to double/multiple degrees or a joint degree. (August 2023). <https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/definitions/>

³ EM-ACT has recently launched a survey aimed at identifying which JPs are issuing a JD or plan to do so in the future, which were the challenges they encountered, and how they faced them. In order not to duplicate efforts, the consortium has reached out to the association representatives to include the results of the survey in the report. These are not available to the general public and were shared with us via email.

additional input from a broader EU perspective, therefore gaining a better understanding of the role that the EU can play in supporting HEIs and national authorities in the successful implementation of JDs⁴. A third interview was conducted to incorporate the perspectives of students and the labour market, often overlooked when addressing the topic of JDs.⁵

This document is divided into four main sections. The first section provides an overview of the current context and implementation of JDs in the EHEA. The second section offers an analysis of the added value of JDs compared to other types of degree arrangement (double/multiple). The third section consists of good practices presented in the form of factsheets, each describing a challenge faced by consortia, at national or European level, along with potential solutions and good practices to address the challenge. Further information and links to these ideas are also included in the factsheet. The last chapter summarises the key takeaways of the report and provides some insights into the future of JDs.

⁴ The interviewees were (i) Yann-Maël Bideau, Policy Officer at the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission; and (ii) David Flacher, EM-ACT representative and director of the EPOG+ Erasmus Mundus Master.

⁵ The interviewee was Ashiqur Rahman, president of the Erasmus Mundus Association (EMA).

2. CONTEXT

This first section provides a definition of Joint Degrees and summarises the legal context at national level that underpins their implementation. Additionally, it describes past and current trends in the implementation of JDs in both the EHEA and the international context.

2.1. What is a joint degree?

As defined in the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, a 'joint degree' is a single document awarded by HEIs offering a joint programme, recognised at the national level as the official award of the joint programme. The JD replaces any individual degree that would have been granted by the respective institutions.

The European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) differentiates among three types of JDs (EACEA, 2020):

- **Type A 'Joint Degree'**: This refers to a single diploma per student that is signed, issued and awarded jointly by all awarding HEIs. The same diploma is awarded to all students of the JP.
- **Type B 'Joint Degrees per track'**: In this case, each student is awarded a diploma that is signed, issued and awarded by the specific HEIs where they pursued their studies within the programme. The number of HEIs signing the diploma varies depending on the graduate's study track and, as a result, different students may receive different diplomas.
- **Type D**: This type involves a combination of several diplomas awarded per graduate: a single diploma jointly signed, issued and awarded by at least two awarding HEIs, combined with (an)other separately awarded diploma(s) from HEIs where the graduate had studied.

In a nutshell, a JD is issued jointly by the HEIs that offer a JP but may not necessarily be issued by all of them.

A fourth type of degree is distinguished by (EACEA, 2020), which differs from JDs. **Type C 'Multiple Degrees'** are several diplomas awarded per student, each one signed, issued, and awarded separately by each of the awarding HEIs where the graduate has studied. When two degrees are awarded by two institutions, it is referred to as a 'double degree' (EQAR, 2015).

2.2. Legal landscape of Joint Degrees

Before the start of the Erasmus Mundus programme, there was limited interest in JDs among Rectors and Ministries, and most institutional and legal frameworks of the Bologna signatory countries did not allow the awarding of JDs (Aerden & Lokhoff, 2013). However, the launch (and appeal) of the funding programme in 2004, acted as a lever for changes in policy frameworks and legislation at national levels. In this respect, higher education partnerships played a pivotal role in facilitating dialogue between the academic world and national authorities, leading to centralised reforms on JPs and tearing down barriers to the implementation of JDs (EACEA, 2017a). As a result, by 2020, **most national legal frameworks accommodated the award of JDs** (EACEA, 2020). The EM action keeps encouraging existing and potential JP consortia to award JDs in line with the strategic priorities of the EU and the Bologna Process.

EACEA (2020) provides an overview of the main legal provisions for joint and double/multiple degrees by Erasmus+ Programme countries. By 2020, most countries allowed for the implementation of joint degrees at Master level, with the exception of Croatia and Romania. The large majority mention JDs to a

varying degree in their legislation. Amongst these Austria, Belgium (French Community), Denmark, France, Sweden, and Turkey provide their own definition of the concept. Many others also go as far as to set specific requirements for the issuing and awarding of JDs, such as minimum credit requirements, language requirements for the degree certificate, mandatory information to provide on the certificate, use of logos, or even specific templates to be used⁶. As explained in the next chapters, having very specific definitions and requirements for JDs may lead to **incompatibilities** between HEIs from various countries. While these incompatibilities positively reflect the diversity and richness of the region's academic landscape, they can also hinder the implementation of integrative initiatives like JDs.

In contrast, countries like Iceland, Ireland, and the United Kingdom (UK) do not explicitly reference the concepts of joint and double/multiple degrees but do allow for the award of collaborative degrees with other national or international HEIs. Cyprus, Bulgaria, and Liechtenstein on the other hand, provide no legal framework on collaborative degrees, but do not prevent their implementation (EACEA, 2020). These two cases therefore give much autonomy to HEIs. However, this autonomy may also result in a general lack of clear rules and definitions, and therefore a **lack of guidance and common understanding**.

Moreover, North Macedonia does reference and define the concept of JDs in its legislation, while giving autonomy to HEIs in terms of content and shape (EACEA, 2020). In other words, HEIs have **enough freedom to implement JDs** within a defined legislative framework that ensures common understanding of the rules and without setting specific requirements that may conflict with those established by other EU Member States.

Romania and Croatia did not allow the implementation of JDs (EACEA, 2020) **until recently**. Romania's new Higher Education Law approved in March 2023 explicitly references JDs and, like North Macedonia, allows universities to establish the process and format of issuing JDs under JPs (Chapter V, Art. 29 (2)). Croatia's Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity, in force since October 2022 (OG 119/22), also grants autonomy to HEIs who are responsible for determining the organisation, performance, completion, place of execution, holder and method of issuing the degree of a JP (Art. 64). While this legislation does not make a direct reference to JDs, Croatia's new Act on the Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science (OG 151/2022), in force since January 2023, prescribes that a joint study of a Croatian HEI and a foreign HEI will be accredited directly applying the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programme, which indirectly facilitates the implementation of JDs.

Some countries that already allowed the implementation of JDs have **further adapted their legislation** to promote the uptake of this initiative. A good example is Spain's new Organic Law of the University System (LOSU) adopted in April 2023, which emphasises the internationalisation of the Spanish university system (Title VII). Universities are encouraged to create joint degrees and programmes as a measure to promote the internationalisation of their academic offer, while the Ministry of Universities and the Autonomous Communities are tasked with facilitating their creation and recognition (Art. 26).

Below, *Figure 1* provides a visual mapping of the legislation of JDs in the EHEA.

⁶ Refer to Annex 6 of the 'Implementation of Joint Degrees in the Erasmus Mundus action of the Erasmus+ programme' by EACEA (2020) for specific examples per country on these JDs requirements.

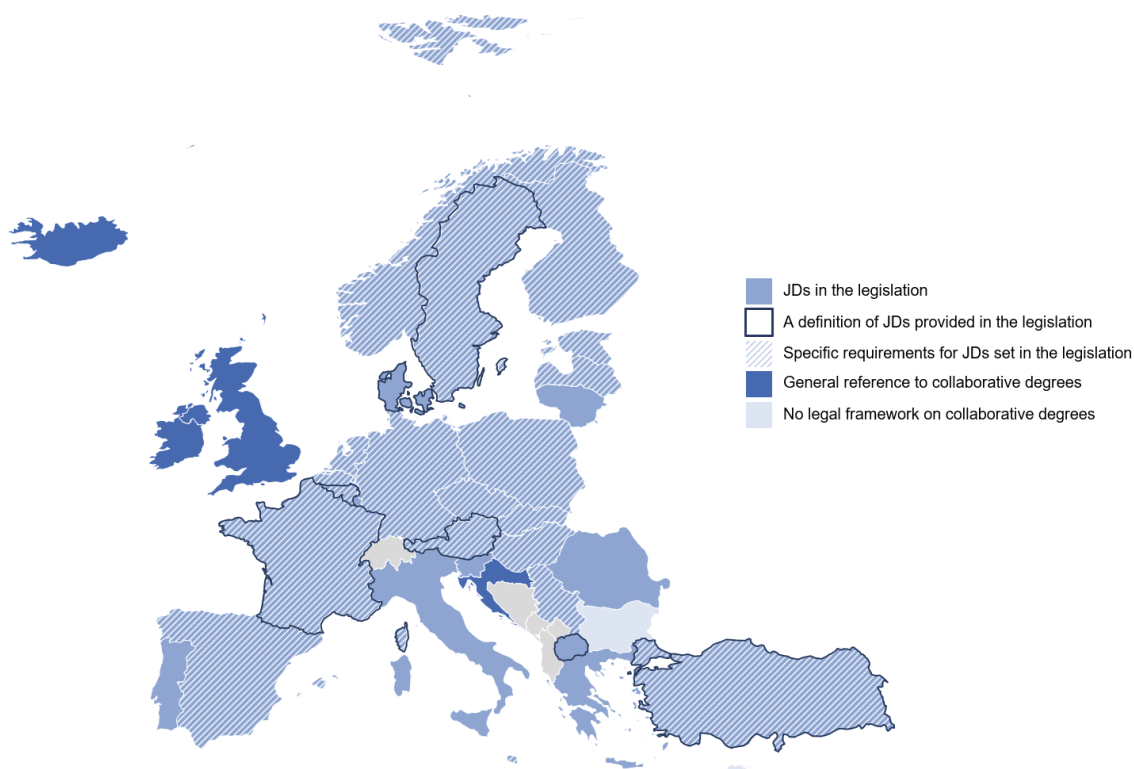


Figure 1 Legal landscape of Joint Degrees at Master level in the EHEA

Source: (EACEA, 2020), complemented with recent updates of national legislation

Lastly, although it seems that there is no direct correlation between the (national/regional/institutional) accreditation requirements and the award of a joint degree (EACEA, 2020), **programme accreditation procedures** play an important role in the issuing of degrees, including JDs. Indeed, these recognition procedures vary considerably among EHEA countries, which creates difficulties when developing JPs overall, regardless of the type of degree awarded. While some grant large autonomy to their HEIs, others establish highly detailed mechanisms in their legislation. As a result, the recognition process can be executed either by HEIs themselves (this is called self-accreditation); or by external bodies (national authorities or accreditation agencies). Some countries define a combined approach of self-accreditation and accreditation by an external body, depending on the nature of the degree awarding institution (public or private) (EACEA, 2020).

2.3. Current implementation of joint degrees

More than half (55%) of the Erasmus Mundus Masters implemented during the years 2014-2020 offer either JDs or degrees with a joint component, while the remaining 45% grants double or multiple degrees. Among the consortia offering JDs, 21% provides a single JD awarded by all partners (type A); 11% award a JD per student track (type B); and 23% issue a combination of joint and multiple degrees (type D) (EACEA, 2020).⁷

Figure 2 below provides a visual representation of the types of degrees delivered by consortia.

⁷ These percentages are based on a sample of Erasmus Mundus Master projects. A total of 107 completed questionnaires were analysed, representing 137 different projects. The survey was conducted in 2019 and did not yet include the 2020 Masters.

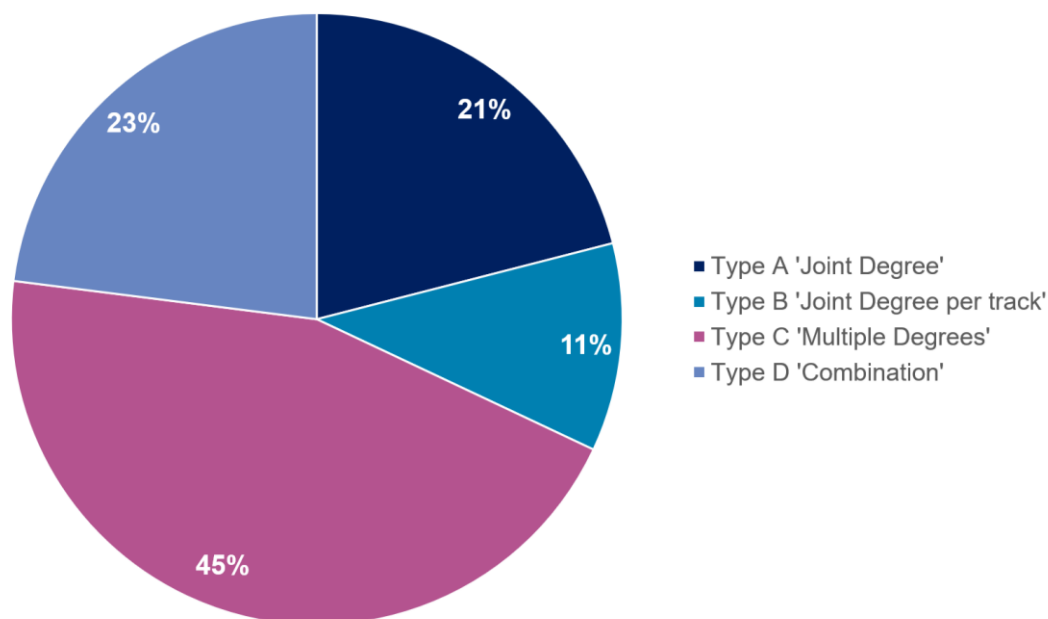


Figure 2 Types of degrees offered by EM Masters implemented during the years 2014-2020

Source: (EACEA, 2020)

Based on this sample, 43% of all full partner HEIs (160) have succeeded in implementing JDs with one or more of their EM partners (EACEA, 2021).

The proportion of programmes awarding JDs (type A and B) **varies among different Erasmus+ programme countries**. Countries such as Austria, Denmark or Poland have a higher proportion, whereas countries like France, Italy or Spain have a lower one (EACEA, 2020).

In addition, the awarding of JDs **differs across different study fields**: economic and social sciences deliver JDs most often, whereas mathematics as well as environmental and geosciences programmes tend to award multiple degrees more frequently (Jühlke & Unger, 2022).

HEIs showcase **increasing interest in delivering JDs**, as demonstrated by the fact that the recent 2019/20 cohort of graduates reported receiving a JD more often than graduates from the 2010/11 and 2015/16 cohorts (Jühlke & Unger, 2022). Supporting these findings, EACEA (2017a) reports that approximately 20% of surveyed HEIs have already established a JD with partner institutions, while 36% were planning to do so in the future.

From an international perspective, international collaborative degrees have emerged as a global trend and are seen by HEIs as means to strengthen relations with foreign institutional partners, increase mobility and improve global competence among faculty and students (Helms, 2014). The **percentage of HEIs offering double/multiple degree programmes is however higher** than those offering joint degree programmes at Bachelor, Master, and Doctorate levels (Helms, 2014; Marinoni, 2019; Obst & Kuder, 2012).

There are **significant regional differences** in the offering of international collaborative degrees, with European countries and North America dominating the list (Helms, 2014; Obst & Kuder, 2012), followed by countries from the Asian region such as Japan, China, and Malaysia (Hou, 2020; Yuki et al., 2012). The percentage of HEIs offering either joint or dual/double and multiple degree programmes seems to be lowest in Latin America & the Caribbean (Marinoni, 2019).

3. ADDED VALUE OF JOINT DEGREES

The concept of Joint Degree has been a long-standing topic on the European political agenda. However, there are differing opinions among stakeholders regarding its **added value in comparison to other degree arrangements**, considering the substantial effort required for their implementation (EACEA, 2020). In this section, we explore the comparative advantages of JDs and answer the question: why should HEIs strive to award JDs in their programmes, and why should countries encourage them?

Below, *Figure 3* provides a preliminary overview of the identified advantages of awarding joint degrees for each stakeholder.

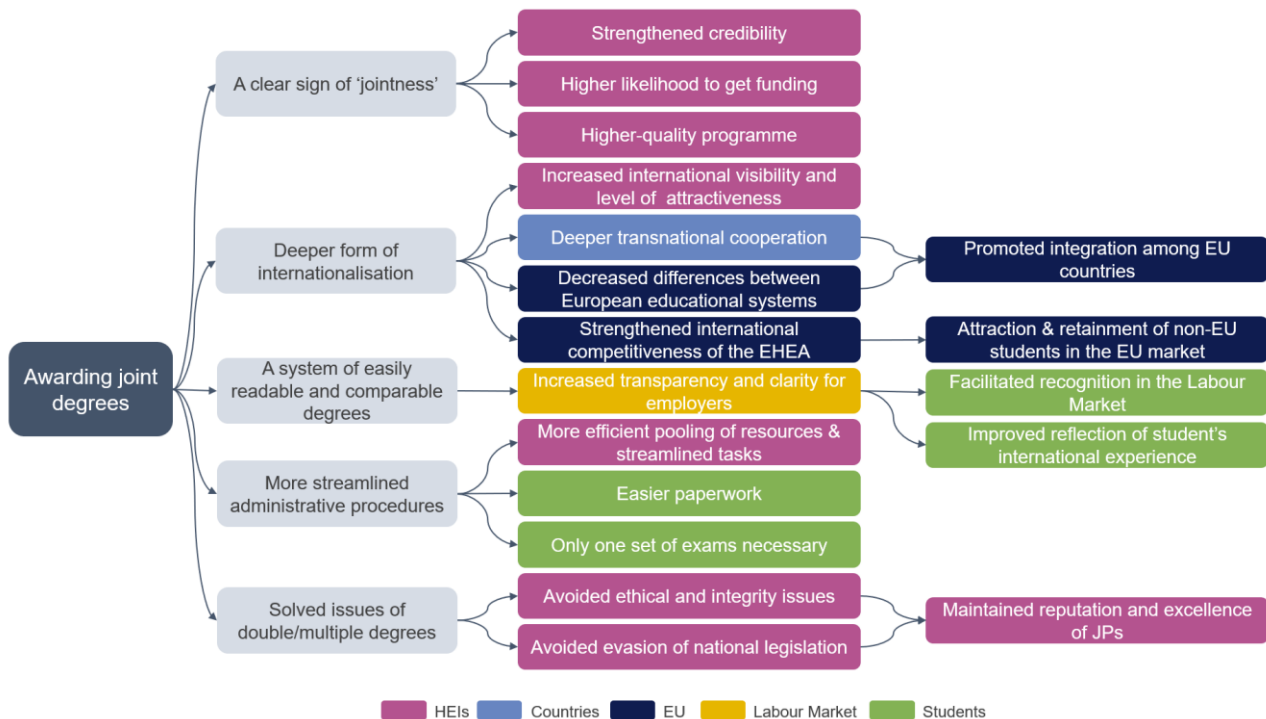


Figure 3 Overview of the advantages of awarding joint degrees for each stakeholder

Source: Based on the analysis and synthesis of the data collected through desk research, survey, and interviews

3.1. A clear sign of 'jointness'

Given the required effort needed to implement a JD, joint degree programmes are said to represent a **more integrated and advanced form of cooperation between HEIs**. They tend to showcase a greater sense of responsibility and ownership within the consortium, consequently contributing to the strengthening of the credibility of both the programme and partnership (EACEA, 2016). This high level of integration is referred to as 'jointness' and is considered a key factor for the effective management of joint courses and curricula. As a result, jointness is also one of the award criteria in the selection of Erasmus Mundus Masters by the European Commission and EACEA (EACEA, 2017b).

In support of this argument, the REDEEM project⁸ highlighted that graduates enrolled in more integrated joint degree programmes tended to report higher satisfaction with the quality of teaching than those in (often less integrated) double degree programmes (Becker, 2020). This observation is also

⁸ Reforming Dual Degree Programmes for Employability and Enhanced Academic Cooperation (REDEEM). (2015-2017). The CLUSTER Network: <https://www.redeemproject.eu/>

echoed by one of the EM-ACT survey (2023) respondents, who considered ‘a coherent and high-quality programme’ as one of the main benefits of awarding JDs. Delivering a JD is therefore considered **one of the clearest indicators of ‘jointness’** (EACEA, 2017b).

In summary, consortia that pursue ‘jointness’ in design and implementation of their programmes and include the award of a JD as a feature of their JP, appear to be the most effective in terms of structured cooperation and curriculum integration. In addition, as the level of jointness is an award criterion, designing and presenting a joint degree programme increases the likelihood of obtaining **Erasmus Mundus funding** (EACEA, 2013; EM-ACT survey, 2023).

As further analysed in the following sections, while jointness can be seen as an invaluable feature of JPs at the EU level, achieving it may pose some challenges for HEIs, as jointness demands significant resources and requires lengthy, time-consuming administrative processes.

3.2. A deeper form of internationalisation

Joint degree programmes require a higher degree of effort and commitment from the consortium, as all aspects of the programme need to be developed jointly by all participating HEIs, including the awarding of a joint diploma (Becker, 2020). This requirement for a stronger level of coordination and cooperation seemingly leads to the creation of stronger relationships among partner institutions (Helms, 2014), thereby facilitating a deeper form of internationalisation (Becker, 2020). Internationalisation, tightly connected to the notion of jointness, is considered a valuable **asset for the visibility and attractiveness of HEIs**, making it one of the key aims of the EM action (EACEA, 2017b). JDs could therefore be a strategically important tool for universities seeking internationalisation (Bideau, 2023).

In terms of internationalisation from a national perspective, JDs are a sign of compatible legislation between countries and could be used as a tool to further increase compatibility (Bideau, 2023). Similarly, from an EU perspective, JDs are an initiative that contributes to transnational cooperation and the strengthening of the EHEA, **promoting integration among its Member States** (Flacher, 2023).

Lastly, as emphasised by the findings of the EM-ACT survey (2023), one of the benefits of JDs lies in their ability to attract ‘non-European students with such a specific feature that is not offered in any other country’. Although they exist outside of Europe, JDs are indeed a particular initiative of the EHEA and can be considered a competitive advantage for the EU, the EHEA and its Member States. By offering international students the opportunity to study in at least two excellent European universities and receive an international degree that is recognised across the EU, JDs have the potential to **attract and retain talent in the EU labour market** (Bideau, 2023).

3.3. A system of easily readable and comparable degrees

JDs contribute to establishing a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, seemingly **promoting employability of graduates** (EACEA, 2013). Respondents to the EM-ACT survey (2023) stated that JDs provide clarity to employers, as only one diploma is issued for one master’s study, instead of several ones for that same programme. Another respondent pointed out that this type of degree arrangement facilitates recognition in both the academic and labour markets.

From the perspective of students, having a single degree awarded by several universities appears to help them better demonstrate their international experience to potential employers (Rahman, 2023).

In conclusion, JDs have the potential to bring **transparency and clarity** for employers, therefore facilitating the recognition of graduates' studies, as they possess an international degree that holds value in different markets.

3.4. More streamlined administrative procedures

Establishing JDs may offer HEIs the advantage of reducing the duplication of work in comparison to other degree arrangements. Whereas double degrees require double recognition, double quality assurance and double administrative work (among others), JDs have the potential of enabling a **more efficient pooling of resources** since all aspects of the programme are developed jointly, therefore allowing to streamline administrative tasks (Bideau, 2023).

In the same line, in the case of multiple degrees, students may be required to take separate rounds of exams to obtain each degree. For instance, if a student is pursuing a double degree awarded by a German university and an Italian one, he/she may have to take a set of exams to obtain the German degree, and another set for the Italian degree. In contrast, with JDs, there is only one joint set of exams since the curriculum is more consolidated, which highly benefits the students (Bideau, 2023). In addition, as pointed out by several respondents of the EM-ACT survey (2023), having several diplomas combined in one single document seems to **simplify paperwork** for graduates.

3.5. Addressing issues of double/multiple degrees

According to EACEA (2016), double/multiple degrees are often regarded as the easiest form of degree awarding for JPs due to the legal and institutional barriers associated with the implementation of JDs. However, there appears to be a common misconception among HEIs regarding double/multiple degrees. These are actually intended to be a single degree awarded in separate documents after the successful completion of a JP, rather than the combination of several individual degrees (one qualification per partner institution). These degrees are therefore void if not combined with all the issued documents. Unfortunately, some HEIs fail to recognise this distinction, leading to confusion and potential issues. This misconception also affects students, who tend to claim that they have graduated from different master's degrees, as mentioned by one respondent in the EM-ACT survey (2023). This raises **ethical and integrity issues related** to awarding more than two qualifications for the workload of a single programme, which verges on academic fraud (Knight, 2015). Furthermore, this confusion may also impact employers and their understanding of the students' qualifications.

Another issue arises from the fact that not all the documents awarded in a multiple degree are always recognised nationally. For instance, some HEIs may not have the authorisation to award a degree to students who are not enrolled at their institution, or they may not be allowed to award a degree at the master's level or in a particular study field. Despite these limitations, as partners of a JP, they may still grant such degrees, which could be seen as evading their national legislation. These issues pose a potential **threat to the reputation and excellence of Erasmus Mundus Masters** (EACEA, 2016). A way to avoid these issues is by prioritising JDs when developing a JP.

4. CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

In this section, we explore the most common challenges encountered by stakeholders when implementing JDs. These are presented in the form of fiches, each one providing the general description of a challenge, accompanied by **one or several potential solutions and good practices** identified in the existing literature, via the EM-ACT survey and through the expert interviews. These preliminary ideas are put forward for discussion by the participants attending the annual conference on ‘Boosting the potential of Joint Degrees in Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programmes’ and are to be further substantiated and improved through this expert input.

The JOIMAN project (2010) identifies two general types of challenges faced by stakeholders when delivering JDs: **national legislation barriers** and **institutional barriers**. A third type of challenge was identified during the analysis of the findings and pertains to issues in **recognition**, which impact students and the labour market. The challenges have therefore been classified into these three categories.

Below, *Figure 4* provides an overview of the identified challenges and ideas to address these at HEIs, national and EU levels.

TYPE	CHALLENGES	IDEAS UP FOR DISCUSSION		
		HEIs	National Authorities	European Union
LEGISLATIVE BARRIERS	Incompatible legal requirements at national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check the different national legislative frameworks Explore other types of JDs Use the Diploma Supplement to address requirements for the award of JDs Continue lobbying and raising awareness 	Review and adapt legislation to accommodate the implementation of JDs	Support countries' review and adaptation of their legislation
	Lack of guidance for HEIs		Provide guidelines on national legislation linked to JDs	
	Undefined and conflicting terminology	Clarify key terminology within the Consortium	Define terminology in the national legislation	Further define and distinguish key terminology
INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS	Incompatible institutional regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow flexibility to JPs with regards to general institutional regulations, OR Develop a dedicated institutional regulation on JPs 		Facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices among consortia
	Institutional resistance to JDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse and understand the strategic added value of JDs Pool resources and streamline processes Develop a timeline for achieving specific targets to award the JD Ensure people and institutional commitment and motivation 	Incentivise HEIs to award JDs (e.g., funding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentivise HEIs to award JDs (e.g., funding) Provide support and advice to HEIs Develop tools tailored to HEIs' needs
RECOGNITION BARRIERS	Employers' & students' lack of recognition of JDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate the importance of a Diploma Supplement to students & employers Promote JDs to students & employers 		Promote JDs to students and employers at EU level

Figure 4 Overview of the identified challenges and ideas for each stakeholder to address them

Source: Based on the analysis and synthesis of the data collected through desk research, the survey, and the interviews

4.1. Legislative barriers

Legislative barriers include (i) incompatibility of the different national legislations related to the specificity of some of their requirements; (ii) the lack of guidance for HEIs on how to interpret their respective national legislation related to JDs; and (iii) the undefined and overlapping terminology around JPs and JDs that lead to misunderstandings and confusion.

INCOMPATIBLE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Description


The legal framework of the higher education sector varies considerably among European countries, showcasing the extensive diversity and richness of the region’s academic landscape. However, this variability can pose challenges to the implementation of integrative initiatives such as the delivery of JDs. In this sense, as mentioned in Chapter 2.2, some countries have set very specific technical requirements within their legal framework for the implementation of JDs. These requirements often lead to **incompatibility issues** across EU Member States as some of them may contradict each other (EACEA, 2020). Examples include:

- **Signature of the diploma:** Some countries have rigid rules related to who and how to sign the diploma. A respondent to the EM-ACT survey (2023) highlights that, due to national limitations, the French partners in their consortium need to issue their own diploma as they are unable to sign a diploma awarded by the consortium’s coordinating university.
- **Compulsory use of a degree template:** In some cases, countries mandate the use of a specific diploma template. When HEIs from two countries with such requirements collaborate, they may not be able to implement a single diploma. Another survey respondent notes that ‘French legislation requires the use of a certain template which differs from the Spanish one. Hence, although the consortium issues a joint diploma with the name of the three universities, this diploma is not recognised in France, where a separate one [needs to be] issued’ (EM-ACT, 2023).
- **Compulsory information:** Countries may require specific information to be included in the diploma, such as the names of the institutions, logos, name of the student, legal texts, etc. The extensive list of mandatory elements can make it hard to fit all the information on one single document. In addition, some elements may contradict each other.
- **Language requirements:** Some countries may have regulations related to using specific national or regional languages in certain parts of the diploma or the entire document. These requirements may be incompatible in some cases or may undermine transparency in some others.
- **Mandatory parchment elements:** Certain countries have specific rules related to the diploma’s physical attributes, such as the paper format, watermarks, official supplier, etc. For instance, in France, if a consortium involving French HEIs does not agree to use the French National Printing paper to deliver the JD, it must opt for another type of degree arrangement, either double or multiple (GO-DIIP, 2023).



Moreover, **minimum academic requirements** are sometimes also set at national level. For example, in some countries JDs are only allowed to be awarded to students who have enrolled at the HEI, who have physically studied there, and/or who have completed a minimum amount of credits at the HEI (EACEA, 2016 & 2020). These requirements oblige consortia to design JDs of type B or D, instead of A.

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

Level	Description
	Check the different national legislative frameworks
	When developing a JD programme, one of the first steps HEIs need to take is to verify the national legislation and educational system of each partner involved. Based on the understanding of the problem, the recommendation is that this task should ideally be coordinated by the coordinating university of

 <p>Institutional</p>	<p>the consortium but carried out individually by each partner. These are, in turn, encouraged to contact their respective ENIC-NARIC offices⁹ as well as their Erasmus Mundus National Structures. Reliable information on each country’s higher educational system can also be found in the ENIC-NARIC website, as well as in the EURYDICE database on European Educational Systems (JOIMAN Network, 2010). Once this information is found and gathered, each partner would report it to the coordinating institution. The coordinating institution would then analyse this information and identify any potential incompatibilities. To address these challenges, all partners could come together to brainstorm and collaborate on finding tangible solutions.</p>
	<p>Explore other types of joint degree arrangements</p>
	<p>For consortia facing challenges with partners having incompatible national legal frameworks, offering a combination of JD with another separate degree awarded per graduate (referred to as ‘Type D’ degree by EACEA) can be a viable solution. In this approach, HEIs subject to restrictive national regulations issue their separate diploma to the graduates who have studied in their institution, while the rest of the consortium awards a single diploma that is jointly signed.</p>
	<p>It is important to note that this degree arrangement, referred to as multiple degree, is only valid when presented in combination, and void when presented separately as several different degrees. To ensure clarity and avoid confusion, HEIs could explicitly state this in the certificate and/or the Diploma Supplement provided to the graduates (EACEA, 2016).</p>
	<p>Use of the Diploma Supplement to address the numerous requirements for the award of JDs</p>
<p>The use of a Diploma Supplement is required in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide (2023) and should be produced by HEIs according to the standards agreed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Council of Europe in the Revised Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2016).</p> <p>The Diploma Supplement is a valuable tool for HEIs to address the numerous requirements for the award of JDs, giving them the flexibility to provide additional relevant information (EACEA, 2020). Aerden & Reczulska (2013) explain that the primary purpose of a Diploma Supplement is to allow any individual with no prior knowledge of the JP to fully comprehend and authenticate it. Therefore, it is crucial that the information is presented clearly and concisely, in order to avoid overburdening the recipient of the Diploma Supplement, which may include quality assurance agencies and recognition bodies, graduates and employers. Aerden & Reczulska (2013) provide further guidelines on the information to be presented in the Diploma Supplement. They also suggest that, in cases where issuing a Diploma Supplement is not feasible, this information would ideally be made available</p>	

⁹ ENIC-NARIC refers to the European Network of Information Centres in the European Region – National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union

	<p>to the public through other means (e.g., webpage) that are archived and easily traceable.</p> <p>The EU provides examples of Diploma Supplements for each country in their Europass toolkit. Although they are not specifically developed for JPs, they could serve as inspiration for consortia.</p> <p>Continue lobbying and raising awareness</p> <p>As previously explained in Chapter 2.2, HEIs have played a crucial role in the development of JPs and piloting of JDs in the past two decades. They have been actively advocating for change at the national level, acting as a lever for policy reforms to facilitate the implementation of JPs and JDs. Therefore, it is vital for HEIs facing restricting national legal frameworks to continue pressuring and raising awareness among national authorities to enable and facilitate the delivery of this type of degree (Aerden & Reczulska, 2013). EM-ACT was established for this exact purpose. The organisation aims to serve as a platform for consortia to collectively engage with the relevant authorities (i.e., ministries) and advocate for solutions to these challenges (Flacher, 2023).</p>
 <p>National</p>	<p>Review and adapt legislation to accommodate the smooth implementation of JDs</p> <p>Countries who seek to facilitate the implementation of JDs in their higher education sector are encouraged to review their legislation and adapt all regulation that extends beyond national borders and imposes requirements on foreign partner institutions (EACEA, 2016 & 2020). Countries could establish, for instance, a different ‘track’ in the legislation that would only apply to issuing international/joint degrees (Bideau, 2023).</p> <p>Additionally, HEIs could be granted a higher level of flexibility and autonomy to implement such unique international programmes (EACEA, 2017a & 2020). In this effort, national authorities could collaborate with countries that have already successfully adapted their legislation, drawing from their experience, and exchanging lessons learned and best practices.</p>
 <p>European</p>	<p>Support countries’ review and adaptation of their legislation</p> <p>The EU may provide technical support and guidance to national governments (including those from partner countries) seeking to review and adapt their legislation to create a coherent legal framework that allows the easy recognition of diplomas.</p> <p>Additionally, the EU could provide a space for dialogue between HEIs and national authorities in order to encourage policy change that enables and facilitates the delivery of JDs. It should also facilitate the identification and exchange of experiences and good practices among national authorities in order to help those who wish to adapt their legislation to accommodate a smoother implementation of JDs.</p>
FURTHER INFORMATION & LINKS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENIC-NARIC Gateway to Recognition of Qualifications https://enic-naric.net/ • EURYDICE, National Educational Systems https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems 	

- European Commission (2023). The Erasmus+ Programme Guide: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-programme-guide>
- Council of Europe; UNESCO (2016). Revised 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: [https://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/Revised Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees 2016.pdf](https://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/Revised%20Recommendation%20on%20the%20Recognition%20of%20Joint%20Degrees%202016.pdf)
- Aerden & Lokhoff (2013). Framework for Fair Recognition of Joint Degrees: [https://ecahe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Framework for Fair Recognition of Joint Degrees.pdf](https://ecahe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Framework%20for%20Fair%20Recognition%20of%20Joint%20Degrees.pdf)
- European Union (2023). Europass Tools - Diploma Supplement example documents: <https://europa.eu/europass/en/diploma-supplement-example-documents>


LACK OF GUIDANCE

Description

In several countries within the EHEA, doubt remains about the legal possibility to award JDs due to **imprecise legal frameworks in terms of JD operationalisation and implementation** (Becker, 2020). This lack of clarity leaves room for interpretation and raises uncertainties regarding the permissibility of JDs within these countries. In this respect, some HEIs have complained about the **unclear rules and the lack of guidance** on how to interpret the national legal frameworks or identify measures to adapt to them (EACEA, 2020).

For example, Matoušek & Tomášek (2021) claim that the Czech Republic’s legislation on higher education provides little and very general guidance to institutions. This ‘openness’ of the legislation has resulted in an array of interpretations and practices in the national sector. In addition, according to a respondent to the EM-ACT survey (2023), there is a prevailing ‘lack of information on what is possible and what is not in all countries’ when it comes to implementing JDs. This general lack of guidance leads some HEIs to prefer awarding double/multiple degrees, as they are perceived to be a simpler and more straightforward option.

IDEAS UP FOR DISCUSSION

Level	Description
 <p>National</p>	<p>Provide guidelines on national legislation linked to JDs</p> <p>National authorities could provide HEIs and other concerned stakeholders with guidelines on how to interpret national legislation, therefore ensuring their harmonised implementation. These would be made available to both national and foreign stakeholders.</p> <p>To be useful and pragmatic, these guidelines would ideally be well-structured, written in user-friendly language and concise, with all the necessary information compiled in a short document with a limited number of pages. The document would be translated in English and easily accessible, preferably available on the competent authority’s official website.</p> <p>Countries can draw inspiration from existing well-documented practices, like those found in the United Kingdom. While the UK does not have specific guidelines on JD implementation, it has a very rich literature providing in-depth guidance to HEIs (EACEA, 2020), such as the ‘Guide to UK higher education and partnerships for overseas universities’ (2013), which clearly explains to overseas HEIs how the UK higher education system works, including a description of the legal regulation on partnerships. Another example is the ‘Degree Awarding Powers and University Title in Scotland: Guidance and Criteria for Applicants’ (2022), which outlines the processes for applying for degree awarding powers and university title in Scotland.</p> <p>In summary, by establishing and disseminating clear guidelines, national authorities can facilitate the smooth implementation of JDs, encourage international collaborations, and provide valuable support to HEIs and other stakeholders involved in joint degree programmes.</p>

FURTHER INFORMATION & LINKS

- Guide to UK higher education and partnerships for overseas universities (2013): https://www.britishcouncil.org.ua/sites/default/files/guide-to-uk-he-and-partnerships_web_final.pdf
- Degree Awarding Powers and University Title in Scotland: Guidance and Criteria for Applicants (2022): https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/degree-awarding-powers-handbook-scotland.pdf?sfvrsn=9594a081_4

UNDEFINED AND CONFLICTING TERMINOLOGY



Description


Desk research has highlighted the **lack of clear definitions regarding Joint Programmes and Joint Degrees** (Aerden & Reczulska, 2013; Becker, 2020; EACEA, 2020; Matoušek & Tomášek, 2021). The confusion between these two concepts is prevalent, and their terminology is often used interchangeably. In addition, many other overlapping terms such as ‘collaborative programmes’, ‘dual degrees’, ‘integrated programmes’, ‘joint curriculum’, ‘join degree programmes’, ‘joint studies’, etc., are used by stakeholders instinctively (Aerden & Reczulska, 2013; EACEA, 2020; Matoušek & Tomášek, 2021).

This confusion is not limited to the literature; and seems to extend to the legislation of many countries, as well as the internal regulations of some HEIs, which do not clearly distinguish the concepts of JPs and JDs.

To clarify the matter, the successful completion of a JP leads to the award of either a JD or a double/multiple degree. Hence, a JP can operate without a JD, but a JD is always part of a JP (EACEA, 2020; EUA, 2022).

IDEAS UP FOR DISCUSSION


Level	Description
 Institutional	<p style="background-color: #e1f5fe; padding: 5px;">Clarify key terminology within the Consortium</p> <p>New consortia are advised to start their partnership by explicitly defining key terminology such as Joint Programmes, joint degrees and double/multiple degrees, in order to avoid any confusion. The European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes serves as the most officially recognised source for these definitions, offering clear and standardised explanations (Becker, 2020). ‘Joint Programmes from A to Z: a reference guide for practitioners’ (2020) also provides a trustworthy overview of the main definitions in the field of JP development.</p> <p>In addition, HEIs are suggested to clearly distinguish the words ‘programme’ (delivery of a curriculum), ‘degree’ (award) and ‘diploma’ (document) and be mindful when making use of these terms during conversations with other partners (Becker, 2020).</p>
 National	<p style="background-color: #e1f5fe; padding: 5px;">Define terminology in the national legislation</p> <p>As mentioned in Chapter 2.2, few countries provide a definition of JDs in their legislation. Denmark, for instance, clearly defines and distinguishes JPs, JDs and double/multiple degrees in its legislation. Countries wishing to follow Denmark’s example, could set definitions of the three concepts in their legal framework in order to ensure harmonised understanding among stakeholders. While the variety of terminology reflects the diversity of languages in Europe and the uniqueness of each country’s academic sector, aligning these definitions with those set forth in the European Approach has the potential to facilitate transnational collaboration between HEIs.</p> <p>Some countries might prefer to avoid establishing formal definitions in their legislation in order to maintain their institutions’ autonomy and flexibility. Instead,</p>

	<p>they could provide guidance to their HEIs on where to find the most officially recognised sources of information that offer clear definitions.</p>
 <p>European</p>	<p>Further define and distinguish key terminology</p> <p>The EU may actively promote alignment with the definitions established in the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. In addition, the Erasmus+ Programme Guide (2023) provides a very detailed glossary of terms related to the Erasmus+ Programme. However, more key concepts and commonly used terms need to be defined either in the European Approach or the Programme Guide. The EU may actively seek support from the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) in order to provide clear distinctions and explanations for all overlapping terms mentioned above.</p>
<p>FURTHER INFORMATION & LINKS</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQAR (2015). The European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, Definitions: https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/definitions/ • Becker, R. (2020). Joint Programmes from A to Z: A reference guide for practitioners: https://impea.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Joint-Programmes-from-A-to-Z-Report-2020.pdf • European Commission (2023). The Erasmus+ Programme Guide (Part D – Glossary of Terms): https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-programme-guide 	

4.2. Institutional barriers

Institutional barriers include two main challenges: (i) incompatibility of institutional regulations among certain HEIs, which can hinder the smooth implementation of JDs within a consortium; and (ii) resistance from some HEIs which, for several reasons, do not fully grasp the benefits and added value of JDs.

INCOMPATIBLE INSTITUTIONAL REGULATIONS	
Description	
<p>Internal rules and regulations of partner HEIs are sometimes incompatible with the delivery of JDs (JOIMAN Network, 2010). These regulations cannot always be easily lifted to enable the implementation of JDs (EACEA, 2020).</p> <p>Some institutional regulations include minimum academic requirements, specifying that JDs can only be awarded to students who have physically studied at the HEI, enrolled there, and/or completed a minimum amount of credits at the HEI (EACEA, 2020). For instance, a respondent to the EM-ACT survey (2023) explained that the consortium could not implement a JD because some partners argued that students could not obtain a degree from them if they had not attended their institution either in person or online.</p> <p>Additionally, institutional regulations may also establish requirements related to the Master thesis, the mandatory presence at some particular stages of the programme (e.g., first and last semester), or the organisation and recognitions of industrial placements in a curriculum (EACEA, 2020). Another survey respondent explains that two of the three main JD-issuing partners had to overcome some specific requirements in their respective regulations related to the number of allowed resit exams: while one partner allowed at least two resits for each exam of all courses, the other one only allowed one per academic year (EM-ACT, 2023).</p> <p>As a result, implementing JDs within a consortium can entail long negotiation processes between HEIs, as they need to agree on all aspects of its delivery. This challenge has been mentioned by many survey respondents as well. As an example, when asked about the main expected challenges in implementing JDs, one respondent expressed the difficulty of ‘getting all JD partners to agree to the others’ regulations (examination, registration, etc...)’ (EM-ACT, 2023). Consequently, such complex negotiations may discourage consortia from designing JDs, leading them to choose other types of degree arrangements instead.</p>	
IDEAS UP FOR DISCUSSION	
Level	Description
 Institutional	<p>Allow flexibility to JPs with regards to general institutional regulations</p> <p>The JOIMAN project (2010) proposes two approaches to adapt institutional rules in order to remove obstacles and facilitate the implementation of JDs. The first solution, known as the ‘ex-post passive approach’, consists in allowing flexibility to individual JPs with regards to internal general regulations, awarding them exemptions where required. The Norwegian Association of HEIs (UHR) (2014) also recommends institutions to deviate from their established regulations, provided that decisions on such deviations are taken by the proper authorities at the HEI (e.g., the institution’s board, the director, etc.). It also advises to add ‘vents’ in the institutional regulations to ensure a smoother process when developing JPs. This means that a rector or a director in certain areas and under certain conditions may be given the authority to deviate from the institution’s ordinary regulations. For example, if the</p>

	<p>institution's ordinary master's degree has a particular language requirement, it may be necessary to accept a different requirement when entering into an agreement on a JP.</p> <p>Develop a dedicated institutional regulation on JPs</p> <p>The second solution presented by the JOIMAN project (2010) – the 'ex-ante active approach' – consists in creating an institutional strategy dedicated to JPs, along with special regulations that are valid for all JPs. Flexibility and autonomy for academic and administrative staff developing these programmes should be envisaged when carrying out this exercise. Some universities have already implemented such an approach. For example, a respondent to the EM-ACT survey (2023) explained that, when implementing their first JD, the HEI had to develop internal rules and a toolkit on JDs to be able to award it.</p> <p>EACEA (2020) highlights the importance of having an institutional strategy for the successful design and development of JPs and their JDs. Girotti (2010) also explains that a dedicated policy has the potential to anchor the development and running of JPs within the institution, giving it credibility when cooperating with other HEIs and enhancing its international profile. It may also help motivate academic and administrative staff to work towards a common goal.</p>
 <p>European</p>	<p>Facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices among consortia</p> <p>Consortia should actively share successful practices with the rest of the EM community to facilitate knowledge exchange and foster continuous improvement of JPs (Rahman, 2023). The EU plays a crucial role in providing a space for such dialogue and exchanges (EACEA, 2020). To support this, the EU is currently developing an Erasmus Mundus Community of Practice (CoP) platform, which will support the exchange of information, news, and peer learning within the EM community. HEIs are encouraged to register once the collaborative platform is operational and to take advantage of its features to learn from each other's experiences and brainstorm solutions to align institutional regulations with the delivery of JDs.</p> <p>In addition to the EM CoP, the EU is organising a series of networking activities for the EM community to share solutions to common problems related to developing JPs. The upcoming annual conference 'Boosting the potential of Joint Degrees in Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programmes' is scheduled for the 30th of November and 1st of December 2023 in Brussels, Belgium. This conference will provide an opportunity for consortia interested in awarding JDs to come together and engage in discussions about JDs' implementation and best practices.</p>
FURTHER INFORMATION & LINKS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JOIMAN (2010). Good Practice Report for the Administration and Management of Joint Programmes (GPR): https://www.joiman.eu/resources/default.aspx • The EM CoP will be launched during the Annual Conference 'Boosting the potential of Joint Degrees in Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programmes', set to be held in Brussels, Belgium on the 30th of November and 1st of December 2023 	

INSTITUTIONAL RESISTANCE

Description


Many consortia do not seem to understand the added value of JDs over multiple ones and are therefore hesitant to award them (Flacher, 2023). This resistance can be attributed to different reasons.

On the one hand, some large and renown universities prefer to leverage their existing brand and reputation (Bideau, 2023). They argue that creating a new degree, such as a JD, would require years to achieve the same status as their well-established ones, and claim that employers seek graduates with **well-known and renowned national degrees** (EACEA, 2013).



On the other hand, the process of awarding JDs demands **significant resources** and requires **lengthy, time-consuming negotiations** at various levels (EACEA, 2020). On top of this, the challenges discussed in previous sections further contribute to the complexities of implementing JDs. The fact that the implementation of JDs is a **case-by-case situation** (Bideau, 2023) that varies depending on the involved HEIs and their respective countries, makes it a particularly challenging process for institutions, especially for those new to JDs (Flacher, 2023). A survey respondent highlights this difficulty stating that ‘there is no clear path on how to issue a single diploma, so there is a lot of trial and error’ (EM-ACT, 2023).

As a result, academic and administrative staff seem to be often **discouraged to develop JDs**, as pointed out by a respondent of the EM-ACT survey (2023): ‘the administration of some of our partner universities is not keen to put effort on this development, or do not have the resources to explore the possibilities’.

IDEAS UP FOR DISCUSSION

Level	Description
 Institutional	Analyse and understand the strategic added value of JDs
	HEIs contemplating the development of a JD are advised to analyse the strategic added value of awarding such degrees as part of their internationalisation plans. They could brainstorm together to identify and understand the benefits of awarding a JD compared to double/multiple ones (Becker, 2020; EACEA, 2020). As explained in Chapter 3, JDs seem to present many competitive advantages, as they appear to (i) indicate jointness among partners; (ii) enable a deeper form of internationalisation; (iii) provide employers with a system of easily readable and comparable degrees; (iv) enable more streamlined administrative processes; and (v) help avoid the risks related to offering double/multiple degrees.
	Pool resources and streamline processes
	JDs may require some initial complexity during their inception phase, but once established, their continuous application becomes easier and more streamlined (Flacher, 2023). Therefore, it is important for HEIs to carefully organise their resources and tasks at the outset of the process . The coordinating institution would ideally play a central role in this exercise, assigning clear roles, tasks and responsibilities to all partners involved. Developing a chart of the work process with timelines for each unit within the consortium can simplify the process and ensure smooth coordination (REDEEM2, 2021).

	<p>Effective communication is essential throughout the implementation phase. Regular meetings among representatives from all involved HEIs could be conducted to discuss progress, address potential obstacles and determine short-term steps to be taken.</p> <p>To streamline the process further, it is recommended that the JD be issued by the coordinating institution, and the partners would need to comply as far as possible with the coordinator’s technical and practical requirements (Sundnes & Kvernmo, 2014).</p> <p>For additional guidance on fostering academic cooperation through the creation of joint programmes, HEIs can refer to the guidelines developed by the REDEEM2 project (2021).</p>
	<p>Develop a timeline for achieving specific targets to award the JD</p>
	<p>Ideally, the JD would be implemented during the development phase of the JP. By doing so, the JD can be ready to be awarded before the first group of students completes their studies. It is therefore essential to define the diploma’s content and format, as well as the consortium’s plan for issuing it, as early as possible (Sundnes & Kvernmo, 2014).</p> <p>However, in some cases, consortia may face challenges and delays in implementing JDs, particularly due to legislative barriers, such as unclear legal frameworks or complex national regulations, as explained in previous sections. As a result, the process of establishing JDs may take longer, and the consortium may initially award double/multiple degrees instead (EACEA, 2013). For example, a respondent to the EM-ACT survey (2023) explained that it took the consortium five years before they could issue their first JDs.</p> <p>For consortia facing delays in implementing JDs, it is recommended to develop a timeline for achieving specific targets throughout the programme to award JDs (EACEA, 2013). This approach can help keep the consortium on track and ensure that the necessary steps are taken to overcome barriers and ultimately deliver JDs to their students.</p>
	<p>Ensure people and institutional commitment and motivation</p>
	<p>The successful implementation of JDs is presumably highly dependent on the human factor. Having committed individuals who are dedicated to making the process work, with strong networks and connections, and partnering with other motivated HEIs are said to be crucial elements (Bideau, 2023). To achieve this, institutions must ensure there is strong leadership and institutional commitment from all partners, as well as within their own institution (EACEA, 2020).</p> <p>In addition, establishing a JD seems to require thinking outside the box and finding innovative solutions (Flacher, 2023). Cultivating a pioneer spirit within HEIs may therefore be crucial to navigate through challenges and barriers (EACEA, 2020).</p> <p>To foster this approach, it is important to involve and engage all relevant stakeholders throughout the entire process. This includes properly organising and dividing tasks and responsibilities, as well as clearly communicating the strategic value of JDs to all involved parties, and allowing space for creativity and exchange of ideas/solutions. Additionally, and as explained in the previous fiche, having an</p>


	<p>internal strategy dedicated to JPs and their JDs may also help motivate staff to work towards a common goal.</p>
 <p>National</p>	<p>Incentivise HEIs to award JDs</p> <p>Incentive mechanisms are needed at both EU and national levels to further incentivise and support HEIs in developing JDs (EACEA, 2020). In this sense, funding is a crucial incentive, considering that this type of degree arrangement is resource consuming.</p> <p>Currently, the EU provides funding through the EM action, which is comprised of two independent lots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot 1: Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters (EMJM) aimed at supporting high-level integrated transnational study programmes at Master level; and • Lot 2: Erasmus Mundus Design Masters (EMDM) aimed at encouraging the development of new, innovative, high-level integrated transnational study programmes at Master level.
 <p>European</p>	<p>Although awarding JDs is not mandatory to obtain any of these funding lots, it is strongly encouraged (Bideau, 2023). JDs are in fact considered a clear sign of jointness and deeper form of internationalisation, which are important award criteria under the EM action (refer to Chapter 3 for further information). Lot 2, in particular, is a relatively recent opportunity implemented in 2021 to further support HEIs in the resource-intensive initiative that is developing a JP from the beginning. It could therefore be said that it indirectly incentivises the awarding of JDs too, as it covers the costs of designing all aspects of the programme.</p> <p>Moreover, the European Universities initiative is another funding opportunity at the EU level that supports HEIs in developing JPs and, wherever possible, JDs (Bideau, 2023).</p> <p>Provide support and advice to HEIs</p> <p>The findings from the EM-ACT survey (2023) highlight the need for increased support and guidance from the EU when it comes to implementing JDs. One respondent specifically mentioned the need for support from EACEA and expressed the difficulty in navigating the bureaucratic processes. Another survey respondent expressed the desire for more assistance and networking opportunities at national and European levels (EM-ACT, 2023).</p> <p>To address this issue, the EU could establish a consulting mechanism, such as a helpdesk, to provide HEIs with readily available support and advice. This mechanism would help HEIs know who to contact within national and European authorities when they are in need of assistance, potentially streamlining the process of seeking help and providing clear channels of communication.</p> <p>In any case, consortia are once again encouraged to make use of the upcoming Erasmus Mundus CoP platform that is being developed by the EU, which will serve as a one-stop-shop for information tailored to the needs of HEIs of the EM community.</p> <p>Develop tools tailored to HEIs needs</p> <p>The EU could develop tools tailored to the needs of HEIs, rather than leaving each consortium to develop its own tools. These could include the creation of a JD</p>

	<p>template accompanied by guidelines outlining the process and steps of implementing JDs. In any case, these tools should be brainstormed and created through collaboration among HEIs and then implemented at EU level (Flacher, 2023).</p> <p>Within its mandate, the EU funds projects aimed at creating methodologies and tools for establishing JPs and promoting peer learning (Bideau, 2023). By continuing to support these projects, the EU plays a crucial role in making the implementation of JDs less time- and resource-consuming for HEIs.</p>
FURTHER INFORMATION & LINKS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REDEEM2 (2021). Guidelines for reforming and creating JPs to enhance student employability and academic cooperation: https://www.redeemproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/2018/04/REDEEM-Guidelines-Manual_final.pdf • See Annex I of this report for an overview of HEIs general journey to acquire a JD • European Commission (2023). Erasmus Mundus Action: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-2/erasmus-mundus • The EM CoP will be launched during the Annual Conference ‘Boosting the potential of Joint Degrees in Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programmes’, set to be held in Brussels, Belgium on the 30th of November and 1st of December 2023 	

4.3. Recognition barriers

Recognition barriers refer to students’ and employers’ lack of awareness or recognition when it comes to JDs and its benefits. While we recognise that these are different stakeholders with different interests, we decided to group them together as the challenges they face in relation to JDs are closely intertwined. The solutions to this challenge are consequently similar. In the analysis below, we ensured that both perspectives to the same problem are tackled and analysed.

EMPLOYERS & STUDENTS LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OR RECOGNITION OF JDs	
Description	
<p>Institutional resistance towards JDs explains, to some extent, why universities have put limited effort to communicate the benefits of JDs with students and employers (EACEA, 2013), leading to a lack of awareness and recognition of JDs compared to well-established national degrees (GO-DIJIP, 2023).</p> <p>Students’ perception of JDs varies, with many seemingly opting for programmes that award double/multiple degrees. On the one hand, double/multiple degrees may be easier for them to explain to employers (Flacher, 2023). On the other hand, there could also be a cultural element to it. In central Europe, for instance, the title given by a degree appears to be very important, and some students pursue a double degree to attain a higher title. For example, while a master’s single degree earns the title ‘<i>magister</i>’, with a double degree a student obtains the title of ‘<i>magister magister</i>’, which students may perceive as more prestigious. This cultural inclination towards seeking higher titles can influence students’ preference for double degrees (Bideau, 2023). Additionally, an EM-ACT survey respondent (2023) explains that having a diploma from a specific country, as opposed to a ‘European’ one, may offer certain privileges. For instance, an Estonian Diploma can facilitate access for non-European graduates to the Swedish academic and labour markets. Considering these factors, if JDs are not highly demanded by students, HEIs may also be less motivated to actively promote them (EM-ACT survey, 2023).</p> <p>For what concerns the perspective of the labour market and employers, there is indeed a lack of comprehensive data to fully understand their views on JDs. However, it appears that employers tend to place greater trust in national degrees (Bideau, 2023). To encourage the uptake and wider implementation of JDs, it seems evident that employers and the labour market need to be more actively engaged in the understanding and recognition of JDs. There appears to be a clear need for employers to gain a better understanding of JDs, which is an aspect that is currently not adequately addressed (Bideau, 2023). As the concept of JDs becomes more established and recognised, it may start to be more widely recognised by Human Resources departments in the future (Flacher, 2023). This highlights the importance of ongoing efforts to raise awareness about JDs and to foster a better understanding among all stakeholders, including employers.</p>	
IDEAS UP FOR DISCUSSION	
Level	Description
 Institutional	<p style="background-color: #e1f5fe; padding: 5px;">Communicate the importance of a Diploma Supplement to students and the labour market</p> <p>The Diploma Supplement serves as a valuable tool that offers HEIs the opportunity to provide additional relevant information on the JD, therefore reasonably increasing transparency and clarity for employers and facilitating the recognition of JDs.</p>

	<p>As explained in Chapter 4.1., the use of a Diploma Supplement is required in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide (2023) and should be produced by HEIs according to the standards agreed by UNESCO and the Council of Europe in the Revised Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2016). It should be designed to allow the employer to fully comprehend and authenticate the JD. For this reason, it is essential that the information presented in the Diploma Supplement is clear, concise and easily understandable, to avoid overburdening the employer with excessive details.</p> <p>In situations where issuing a Diploma Supplement is challenging for a consortium, it is vital to ensure that employers can still access relevant information through other means, such as dedicated webpages or repositories, that are archived and easily traceable.</p> <p>Lastly, HEIs should pour additional efforts into communicating to both students and the labour market, the role that Diploma Supplements play for them to better understand qualifications across states.</p> <p>Promote JDs to students and employers at institutional level</p> <p>HEIs play an important role in promoting JPs and JDs to raise awareness and knowledge among students and employers, ultimately facilitating the recognition of JDs in the labour market. According to UNESCO and the Council of Europe in the Revised Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2016), this information must be easily available for its target audience, accurate, adequate, relevant and reliable.</p> <p>Communication activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving the labour market more actively in JPs that award JDs. Cultivating deeper industry-related partnerships has the potential to lead to greater recognition and acceptance of JDs in the job market (Rahman, 2023). This can be achieved, for instance, by engaging employers in the development and design of JPs, ensuring that the skills and competencies gained align with industry needs and demands; • Actively communicating the learning outcomes and competencies acquired by graduates in these programmes to potential employers (Bideau, 2023; EACEA, 2013). This information can be detailed in the Diploma Supplement provided to employers, giving them clear insights into the qualifications and capabilities of JD holders. It is crucial that the skills acquired by graduates closely match the needs of the employer to ensure successful recognition of JDs and JPs; • Prepare students to effectively present their international experience and the value of their degrees to employers.
 <p>European</p>	<p>Promote JDs to students and employers at EU level</p> <p>The EU could take a more proactive approach in promoting the added value of JDs to Member States, students and employers. Special attention could be given to actively raising awareness among potential employers about the specific learning outcomes of these programmes (Bideau, 2023; EACEA, 2013).</p> <p>It is essential to convey the message that JDs are not something that exists at the margin but are well-recognised qualifications with specific competitive advantages.</p>

	<p>The networks of institutions that award these degrees, along with the students who receive them, truly exemplify the ideals of an integrated European education. JDs have the potential to become a standard practice in the future of EHEA, making them even more valuable for employers (Bideau, 2023).</p> <p>Lastly, the EU's communication efforts would ideally extend beyond the EHEA to reach other regions worldwide. Increasing the visibility of JDs on the international labour market can help students graduating from HEIs in Europe have their degrees recognised and valued overseas (EACEA, 2020).</p>
--	---

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Key takeaways

Over the last two decades, JPs and JDs have been encouraged by the Bologna Process as tools that enable a **more comparable, compatible, and coherent EHEA**. The EM action stimulated their development, incentivising HEIs and national authorities to adapt their regulations in order to facilitate the implementation of JDs. As a result, today, many HEIs have already succeeded in awarding JDs with one or more of their EM partners.

The EU continues to actively encourage the adoption of JDs in JPs as they seemingly offer **many competitive advantages** to different stakeholders: they seem to (i) indicate a higher level of jointness among consortia; (ii) enable a deeper form of internationalisation between HEIs as well as between countries; (iii) provide employers with a system of easily readable and comparable degrees; (iv) enable more streamlined administrative processes within institutions; and (v) help address the issues related to offering double/multiple degrees.

However, **challenges persist at institutional and national levels**, limiting their implementation. Legislative barriers arise from conflicting national legal requirements on JDs, a lack of guidance for HEIs on how to interpret their respective national legislation, and confusion regarding the terminology used for JPs and JDs. At the institutional level, conflicting general regulations among HEIs are said to hinder the award of JDs as the general regulations of some HEIs conflict. In addition, some HEIs seem to show resistance to the concept of a JD, perceiving more disadvantages than advantages in their development. Furthermore, recognition barriers arise from the fact that both students and employers have yet to fully grasp the concept of a JD and therefore purposely seek for programmes that award double/multiple degrees.

Further efforts and adjustments from HEIs, national authorities and the EU are therefore still needed to overcome these challenges. HEIs could focus on (i) strengthening partnership and collaboration with the consortia to streamline administrative processes, (ii) fostering flexibility within institutional regulations, and (iii) analysing the strategic value of JDs to incentivise their implementation. For HEIs, proactive measures seem also essential in raising awareness among students, employers, and national authorities about the benefits of JDs. National authorities play a pivotal role in supporting HEIs by providing clear guidelines, adapting legislation, and offering incentives for awarding JDs. Collaborative efforts between national authorities and the EU have the potential to facilitate policy changes and foster integration within the EHEA, all while preserving the range, diversity and richness of the European academic's landscape. The EU can further contribute by promoting JDs through comprehensive communication strategies and offering substantial support and guidance to HEIs.

By discussing these ideas, stakeholders can pave the way for the future growth and recognition of JDs, contributing to the **advancement of European education on the global stage**.

5.2. The future of joint degrees

Policymakers at EU level aim to accelerate the implementation of JDs through new policy initiatives, such as the **European Degree label**, currently in test-mode. The primary objective of this initiative, if successful, would be the first step towards a possible joint 'European Degree', facilitating the issuing of joint qualifications, such as JDs, across the EHEA, overcoming existing barriers in transnational cooperation and disseminating universal criteria connected to corresponding joint programmes. On current planning, this label could serve as a complementary certificate for students who complete a JP in the context of transnational cooperation between several HEIs. The European Degree label could be

issued on a voluntary basis, at national, regional or HEI level, based on these co-created European criteria, in accordance with the existing instruments of the Bologna Process. It would be easy to issue, store, share, authenticate, and recognised across the EU (Council of Europe, 2022). Six selected projects are currently exploring the possibility of delivering a joint European Degree label, based on a common set of European criteria.

If successful, the European Degree label initiative could present several advantages for the wider adoption and recognition of JDs. By establishing common quality standards in accreditation, quality assurance and recognition, the initiative would imaginably streamline the delivery of JDs with consistent and agreed-upon criteria (EACEA, 2020). For graduates and employers, the label would likely signify that the JD was obtained through a high-quality JP created with a coherent and collaborative approach (Flacher, 2023; Rahman, 2023). As such, the initiative may serve as an incentive for HEIs to implement JDs, as they might recognise the potential of JDs to share **the future of European Education** (Bideau, 2023). The enthusiasm for this initiative appears evident in the EM-ACT survey (2023) results, which show HEIs eagerness to learn more about and engage with the development of the European Degree label.

That said, the European label for JPs will not automatically solve all previously explained challenges (EUA, 2022). The success of the joint European Degree label seems to hinge on widespread recognition of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (Flacher, 2023; EUA, 2022). For the initiative to attain its objective, Member States would therefore need to implement the **Bologna instruments** to strengthen the integrated higher education area, with particular emphasis on the European Approach (EACEA, 2020).

Nevertheless, there seems to be a clear growing trend towards JDs among consortia implementing JPs, which will likely continue in the future. JDs will thrive in parallel with the continuous global growth of international collaborative degrees (Obst & Kuder, 2012), as well as with the increasing digitalisation of such programmes (Bideau, 2023). To remain relevant and meet the demands of the future, JPs and JDs must remain **adaptable and responsive to the evolving landscape of European Education**. As such, embracing and actively contributing to the European Degree label initiative could be a crucial step forward in achieving greater recognition and success for JDs within the European Higher Education Area.

REFERENCES

- Aerden, A., & Lokhoff, J. (2013). *Framework for Fair Recognition of Joint Degrees*. European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education. Retrieved from https://ecahe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Framework_for_Fair_Recognition_of_Joint_Degrees.pdf
- Aerden, A., & Reczulska, H. (2013). *Guidelines for Good Practice for Awarding Joint Degrees*. European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education. Retrieved from <https://ecahe.eu/guidelines-for-good-practice-for-awarding-joint-degrees/>
- Becker, R. (2020). *Joint Programmes from A to Z: A reference guide for practitioners*. FaBoTo+ project. Retrieved from <https://impea.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Joint-Programmes-from-A-to-Z-Report-2020.pdf>
- Bideau, Y. M. (2023, June 26). Awarding Joint Degrees. (NTT DATA, Interviewer)
- Council of Europe. (2022). The Council Recommendation on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation adopted on the 5th of April 2022. *Official Journal of the European Union*. Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H0413%2801%29>
- Council of Europe, UNESCO. (2016). Revised 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. Paris, France. Retrieved from https://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/Revised_Recommendation_on_the_Recognition_of_Joint_Degrees_2016.pdf
- Croatian Parliament. (2022, October 7). Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity (OG 119/2022). *National Journal of the Republic of Croatia*. Retrieved from https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2022_10_119_1834.html
- Croatian Parliament. (2022, December 20). Act on the Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science. *National Journal of the Republic of Croatia*. doi:https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2022_12_151_2330.html
- EACEA. (2013). *Joint International Master Programmes: Lessons learnt from Erasmus Mundus: The first generation - EACEA Synthesis Report*. Publications Office of the European Union. doi:<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/26992>
- EACEA. (2016). *Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees: The story so far*. Publications Office of the European Union. doi:<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/530999>
- EACEA. (2017a). *Erasmus Mundus Action 2 partnerships: Main achievements and results (2010-2018)*. Publications Office of the European Union. doi:<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/010013>
- EACEA. (2017b). *Sustainability of Erasmus Mundus Master Courses: Best practice guide based on survey results and analysis*. Publications Office of the European Union. doi:<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/019359>
- EACEA. (2020). *Implementing Joint Degrees in the Erasmus Mundus action of the Erasmus+ Programme*. Publications Office of the European Union. doi:<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/896549>
- EACEA. (2021). *Erasmus+ Programme, Statistical factsheets on the achievements of the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (2014-2020)*. Publications Office of the European Union. doi:<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/639462>
- EM-ACT. (2023). Survey about joint degrees implementation.

- EQAR. (2015). The European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. Obtenido de <https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/>
- EUA. (2022). *Policy Input on Considerations for a "European Degree"*. European University Association. Retrieved from <https://eua.eu/resources/publications/1026:considerations-for-a-%E2%80%9Cceuropean-degree%E2%80%9D.html>
- Flacher, D. (2023, June 27). Awarding Joint Degrees. (NTT DATA, Interviewer)
- Girotti, F. (2010). The Management and Administration of Joint Degree Programmes: Models, Trends, Good Practices and Recommendations. *INTED2010 Conference*. Valencia, Spain. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228454454_THE_MANAGEMENT_AND_ADMINISTRATION_OF_JOINT_DEGREE_PROGRAMMES_MODELS_TRENDS_GOOD_PRACTICES_AND_RECOMMENDATIONS
- GO-DIIP. (2023). *Handbook and Policy Recommendations*. Retrieved from <https://amplifier.w.uib.no/files/2023/03/GO-DIIP-Handbook-and-Policy-Recommendations.pdf>
- Helms, R. M. (2014). *Mapping International Joint and Dual Degrees: U.S. Program Profiles and Perspectives*. ACE & CIGE. CIGE Insights. Retrieved from <https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Mapping-International-Joint-and-Dual-Degrees.pdf>
- Hou, Y. (2020). Quality assurance of joint degree programmes: what Asia can learn from Erasmus Mundus joint degree programmes in Europe. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 18(1), 19-29. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2019.1690083>
- JOIMAN Network. (2010). *Good Practice Report for the Management and Administration of Joint Programmes*. Retrieved from <https://www.joiman.eu/resources/default.aspx>
- Jühlke, R., & Unger, M. (2022). *Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Graduate Impact Survey 2020/21: Comprehensive report of results*. Institut für Höhere Studien – Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS). Retrieved from https://www.esaa-eu.org/fileadmin/esaa/content/news/files/2022/gis_202021_definite_report.pdf
- Knight, J. (2015). International Universities: Misunderstandings and Emerging Models? *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 19(2), 107-121. doi:10.1177/1028315315572899
- Marinoni, G. (2019). *Internationalization of Higher Education: An Evolving Landscape, Locally and Globally - IAU 5th Global Survey*. International Association of Universities (IAU). Retrieved from https://www.iau-aiu.net/IMG/pdf/iau_5th_global_survey_executive_summary.pdf
- Matoušek, J., & Vojtěch, T. (2021). Joint programmes – from international policy to national practice. Intertwining of typology and accreditation of international study programmes in (not only) Czech Republic. *2021 Online European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF)*. doi:<https://eua.eu/resources/publications/998:joint-programmes-%E2%80%93-from-international-policy-to-national-practice-intertwining-of-typology-and-accreditation-of-international-study-programmes-in-not-only-czech-republic.html>
- Obst, D., & Kuder, M. (2012). International Joint- and Double-Degree Programs. *International Higher Education*(66), 5-7. doi:<https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2012.66.8585>
- Rahman, A. (2023, July 13). Awarding Joint Degrees. (NTT DATA, Interviewer)
- REDEEM2. (2021). *Guidelines for reforming and creating joint programmes to enhance student employability and academic cooperation*.

- Romanian Ministry of Education. (2023, March 29). Higher Education Law. Retrieved from https://edu.ro/sites/default/files/_fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2023/proiecte_Legi_Romania_educata_2023/Legea_invatamantului_superior.pdf
- Sundnes, J. R., & Kvernmo, T. M. (2014). *Handbook on Joint Degrees*. Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR). Retrieved from https://www.uhr.no/en/_f/p3/i099a9f4e-cb2a-4cf9-b97a-6919944fa15c/fellesgradshandbok_endelig_engelsk.pdf
- Yuki, T., Hong, Y., Kang, K., & Kuroda, K. (2012). *Cross-Border Collaborative Degree Programs in East Asia: Expectations and Challenges*. JICA Research Institute. Retrieved from https://www.jica.go.jp/jica-ri/publication/workingpaper/jrft3q00000023zl-att/JICA-RI_WP_No.39_2012_3.pdf

ANNEX

Annex I – Institutional journey to establish a Joint Degree

The data collected throughout the preparation of this report allowed us to draw the following institutional journey to implement a JD. As mentioned in previous chapters, the process of establishing a JD is a case-by-case situation that varies depending on the involved HEIs and their respective countries. The map below provides a summarised overview of the essential high-level steps that HEIs are encouraged to follow when embarking on the development of a JD.

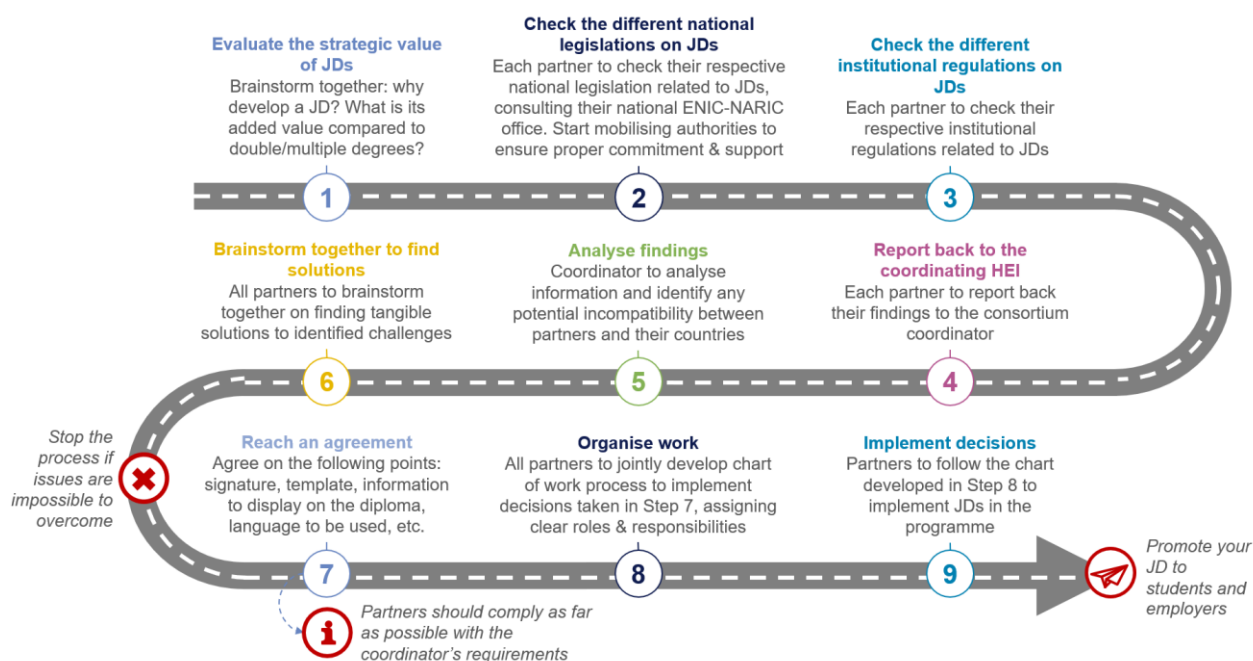


Figure 5 Overview of institutional journey to establish a Joint Degree

Annex II – List of identified experts

During the data collection phase, we identified some key experts that could potentially participate as speakers for the annual conference 'Boosting the potential of Joint Degrees in Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programmes' which will be held in Brussels (Belgium) the 30th of November and 1st of December 2023. The table below lists these identified experts, along with their current roles.

Table 2 List of identified experts

Expert	Role
Aerden, Axel	Quality Assurance Coordinator, Netherlands-Flanders Organisation for Accreditation (NVAO) and co-author of <i>Framework for Fair Recognition of Joint Degrees</i> (2013) and <i>Guidelines for Good Practice for Awarding Joint Degrees</i> (2013)
Becker, Rosa	Senior Policy Officer & Researcher, Nuffic, The Netherlands and author of <i>Joint Programmes from A to Z: A reference guide for practitioners</i> (2020)
Bideau, Yann-Maël	Policy Officer at DG EAC of the European Commission
Flacher, David	EM-ACT representative and director of the EPOG+ Erasmus Mundus Master
Girotti, Francesco	International Relations Officer and Adjunct Professor at the University of Bologna and author of <i>Management and Administration of Joint Degree Programmes: Models, Trends, Good Practices and Recommendations</i> (2010)
Lokhoff, Jenneke	President ENIC Bureau at ENIC-NARIC Networks and co-author of <i>Framework for Fair Recognition of Joint Degrees</i> (2013)
Rahman, Ashiqur	President of the Erasmus Mundus Association
Reczulska, Hanna	Director of the Department for Recognition of Education and Authentication of Documents, Polish National Centre for Academic Exchange and co-author of <i>Guidelines for Good Practice for Awarding Joint Degrees</i> (2013)