



**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**  
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD



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# ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION ESSENTIALS

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR APPROVING AND ADMINISTERING COLLABORATIVE DEGREES

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# DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY (DRAFT SA POLICY)

**Cotutelle** means is an arrangement where doctoral students are supervised jointly by academics from a South African university and a partner foreign university.

**Joint degree** refers to a degree awarded by joint decision of the partner institutions at the successful completion of a jointly offered single study programme by two (or more) higher education institutions. If the partner(s) cannot come to a joint decision to award the joint degree, none of the partners may then proceed to award the degree outside the agreement as a single institution degree.

**Double degrees** refers to are the outcome refers to degree of programmes of study offered collaboratively by two higher education institutions (A and B) in terms of a programme partnership-agreement that may feature jointly-developed and integrated curricula and agreed-upon mutual credit recognition and the successful student is awarded two distinct degrees issued separately by each of the two institutions involved in the programme.

**Alternative definitions – Coimbra Group ?**

# THE ROLE OF ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION

- Academic administration lies within the **Registrar's line**
- Primarily concerned with **student** and **qualification** records
- This is managed through
  - i. **Governance structure** for the structure and curricula of qualifications and programmes of study
  - ii. Institutional student and qualification **records system** (at UCT, this is PeopleSoft)
- UCT has a highly devolved structure:
  - **Academic departments** deliver courses and support students in their daily attendance on campus
  - **Faculties** quality assure curricula and qualifications, and maintain student records
  - **Central departments**, in the context of collaborative degrees,
    - Maintain the information management architecture (**Registrar's Office**)
    - Facilitate and manage agreements with other universities (**International Office**)
    - Facilitate and manage the contractual aspects for research qualifications (**Research Office**)

# WHY COLLABORATIVE DEGREES ARE COMPLICATED

**Three internal organisational structures** need to work closely to deliver the framework for collaborative degrees.

How do you get the

- **Registrar's Office** which
  - manages academic administration of the qualification and student record through faculties
  - in a devolved structure*and*
- **International Office** which
  - manages external relationships and oversees bilateral agreements with no line to the teaching structures
  - on behalf of the DVC*and*
- **Research Office** which
  - manages contractual aspects (including IP) with no line to the teaching structures
  - on behalf of the DVC

to align in delivering the collaborative degree as a streamlined and holistic experience for the students and academics?

# I. THE UNDERLYING CONDITIONS THE DEGREE/ QUALIFICATION & SENATE POLICY ON JOINT QUALS

- The primary condition for a joint/ collaborative degree is **the qualification.**
- The qualification will be jointly awarded.
- Both institutions must have
  - an accredited/ approved qualification or degree available for the students
  - with sufficient correspondence in academic level, structure and outcomes
  - for the qualifications to be considered ‘joint’

In the case of PhDs, this is not necessarily difficult as the curriculum is specific to the doctoral candidate.

But each HEI also needs an institutional (Senate) policy on joint qualifications (compliant with all existing related legislation)

## 2. ALIGNMENT OF QUALIFICATION RULES IN AGREEMENT

Once the shared/ corresponding qualification is identified, alignment between rules should be considered.

- What are the institutional and qualification specific admission requirements?
- How are students selected?
- How is supervision managed and recorded (MOU)?
- What are the arrangements for examination at the participating institutions?

The bilateral agreement will detail the outcomes of this comparative review.

It should be explicit about how they will be dealt with in the collaboration

- Will one institution change its requirements/ rules?
- Will both parties agree on requirements which are different from both institutions (i.e. compromise and put qualification-specific rules in place)?
- Will the requirements of both partners hold? (additional burden on the student)

## 3. PROVISIONS THAT MUST BE INCLUDED IN AGREEMENTS

### Considerations at Faculty level

- Admission
- Registration
- Student monitoring
- Examination
- Certification

## 3. PROVISIONS THAT MUST BE INCLUDED IN AGREEMENTS

### **Admission**

- Language requirement
- How are students selected, and against which admission requirements?
- Who does the selection?

### **Registration**

- Where will they register?
- At both institutions simultaneously or by alternating registration between the two?
- What are the fee-paying or fee waiver arrangements? What fees are covered in a waiver? Has consideration been given to the practical aspects?
- Housing?



# 3. PROVISIONS THAT MUST BE INCLUDED IN AGREEMENTS (CONT'D)

## **Student monitoring**

- How are students supervised?
- Where is this recorded?
- What paperwork must be submitted – by whom and to whom?
- What are the differing arrangements for MOUs at each institution?

## **Examination**

- What rules apply for examination?
- Is the exam by written submission or viva voce?
- What are the attendance requirements (for candidate and examiners)?
- Where there are different exam requirements, which one will prevail?
- Will the student have to undergo two separate examinations? This is often required.

## **Certification**

- Naming of the degree awarded at each institution
- How is the agreement reflected on the certificate/s?

## 4. PROCEDURE FOR APPROVING A JOINT DEGREE

- Two approvals processes must be pursued
- They can be done in parallel
- Each passes through a different part of the governance structure
  - 1. Qualification and curriculum approval:**
    - What is the joint qualification?
    - Is it accredited by CHE?
    - Is it in the PQM (list of all accredited qualifications offered by the University)?
    - Institutional Planning Office, with Faculty Academic Administration, coordinates approval for Senate via Faculty Board.
  - 2. Partnership with other university:**
    - Do we want to collaborate with the other institution?
    - Do we have the resources and capacity to enter into an agreement?
    - International Office coordinates approval for attention to Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Research and Internationalisation reporting to Council

The governance structures and approvals processes need to be brought into line for joint collaborations to succeed.

## 5. ADMINISTERING A JOINT DEGREE

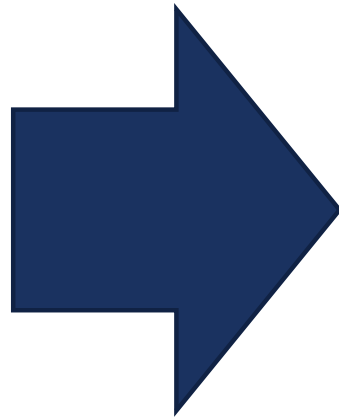
It took us some time but we have created processes for guiding joint degrees through both tracks within our governance structure.

UCT's remaining challenge is one of administrative alignment:

1. CRM is the database used by the International Office to record all partnership agreements
2. PeopleSoft is the database used by the Registrar's Office to record all qualification attributes and student registration records
3. eRA is the database used by the Research Office to manage research contracts

## 5. ADMINISTERING A JOINT DEGREE (CONT'D)

- These databases do not always speak to each other
- Manual work-arounds are sometimes necessary
- International Office coordinates the agreement but needs to pass on the details for implementation to...



Academic Administration offices (in the Registrar's line) who must ensure that

- Fee waivers are applied as required (Fees Office, central unit in the Finance line)
- Students who span registration years are not double-charged (International Office, central unit in the DVC's line)
- Students are registered correctly and the collaborative nature of their programme is captured in student records system (Faculty academic administration in the Dean's line)
- Students are appropriately supervised (Departmental academic administration in the Dean's line)
- Examination arrangements are with reference to the agreement (doctoral degrees board in the Registrar's line)
- The degree certificate is co-badged (Registrar's Office)

## 6. DISCUSSION

Our challenges are now predominantly administrative. These should not be under-estimated. They can occasion significant delays and affect the experience of both students and academics.

- i. How do you deal with these issues at your institution?
- ii. What are your challenges?
- iii. Have you found a work-around through your governance structures?
- iv. Do your record-keeping systems and databases deliver greater integration?
- v. Or is integration achieved through explicit business process management between offices/ departments?
- vi. What do our colleagues from the EU think? Do you have any concerns about the way South African universities manage collaborative degrees?

THANK YOU



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**YEBO!**



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