



Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe

The UNICA Bologna Laboratory

UNICA Manual on Joint Degrees 1.0

David Baldinger
Maren Ebert
Brigitte Römmer-Nosseck

Roma III, November 18th, 2005

UNICA Manual on Joint Degrees 1.0



Why a joint degree manual?

History: idea and stages of development

→ *“crucial role of joint degrees as a catalyst for a set of components integral to the overall aims of the Bologna process...”*

The idea of the UNICA Bologna Lab Manual was first formulated at the *2nd Meeting of the UNICA Bologna Lab Coordinators* in Vienna in December 2004

UNICA Manual on Joint Degrees 1.0



Aims of the Joint Degree Manual

- a *process-oriented* online manual incorporating academic and administrative issues
- a *dynamic instrument* specifically designed for the benefit of UNICA members interested in the creation of Joint Degrees
- aim: the main corpus of the manual will consist of a set of *precise questions and guidelines*

UNICA Manual on Joint Degrees 1.0



Third Meeting of UNICA Bologna Lab Coordinators in Madrid, July 2005

→ consequence: a working group was installed - actual grass roots work began

Scope of the project

→ **Participants:** We addressed the community of Lab Coordinators: currently 27

→ **Timeframe:** mid-August 2005 to mid-October dissemination of questionnaire including feedback mechanisms
early November 2005: processing replies, identifying trends and drawing conclusions



The Manual

The two integral components of *The Manual*

→ 1. Framework: legal and administrative dimensions and realities – *facts and legal status quo*

→ 2. Survey: experiences so far – *first-hand accounts and impressions*

Character

Work in progress: based on a solidly established core information pool it accompanies UNICA's development and expands organically



Framework

Approach

A catalogue of questions specifically tailored to previously identified key areas

- Type of degree that can be awarded
- Admission criteria
- Tuition fees
- Responsibility of decision/approval of curricula



Framework

Process

Step 1: send out the questionnaire with request to comment on the adequacy and currency of the questions

Yielded limited response.

Step 2: Modification and adaptation of questions

Step 3: sent out again – with a clear time frame instructions outlining how to go about it

Step 4: Astonishing rate of replies
~ 75 % of institutions – some offering multiple answers

Step 5: Production of the UNICA Manual on Joint Degrees 1.0



Legal and administrative framework

Findings in a nutshell

- Implications of Lisbon conventions remain disputed - feeling that legislation still not in place
- most institutions do not face any legal recognition obstacles
- The Diploma Supplement only partially implemented
- The institutions charging tuition fees only marginally outweigh those who do not – JD students more often than not pay full fees
- Organisational workflows remain unclear in many universities
- No specific procedures for Joint Degrees are currently being planned



Manual Part Two: Experiences so far


Survey

Bologna Lab Coordinators as information brokers - approached their institution's Joint Degree people

Represents and distils the experience of 20 Joint Degree Programmes within the UNICA network

4 areas of information

- ➔ Disciplines and partners
- ➔ Organisation of the consortium
- ➔ Institutional support
- ➔ DOs and DONTs


 Survey \ Disciplines and partners

Established Disciplines

- natural sciences
- Engineering
- business studies
- law studies
- social sciences
- languages

Interdisciplinary Study Programmes

UNICA Manual on Joint Degrees 1.0

 Survey \ Disciplines and partners

Established Disciplines


- natural sciences
- Engineering
- business studies
- law studies
- social sciences
- languages


→ Pooling of expertise
→ Offering students a wider range of specialisations

Interdisciplinary Study Programmes

→ Genuinely novel programmes

UNICA Manual on Joint Degrees 1.0

 20 joint degrees within the UNICA network



UNICA Manual on Joint Degrees 1.0

UNICA

UNICA joint degrees

UNICA Manual on Joint Degrees 1.0

UNICA

Survey \ Organisation of Consortia

Joint degree consortia are usually based on existing relations.
Stable – tend to grow rather than shrink

Rationale/ideas
Rather homogeneous, some cases heterogeneous; mutual respect and trust as indispensable core values

Concept
Tendency: by one or two partner/s. Basis for joint effort.

Commitment
No general trend – some consortia commitment distributed equally committed, others unevenly spread

Leadership (one leader/subgroup/even distribution)
All variations exist, slight preference for dynamic core group

UNICA Manual on Joint Degrees 1.0

UNICA

Survey \ Institutional support

Support*	Information*
- Rectorate 8,4	- Erasmus 8,2
- Faculties 7,5	- Mobility 8,0
- Departments 8,8	- ECTS 7,8
	- Bologna 7,1
	- Accreditation 6,6
	- Diploma Supplement 6,2
	- Staff cost 5,4
	- Cost calculation curriculum 4,8
	- Infrastructure cost 4,1
	- Cost for shared lectures 4

*scale 1 (not at all) – 10 (very much)

UNICA Manual on Joint Degrees 1.0



Survey \ Institutional support

four dimensions inscribe and sketch the contours of the current institutional support situation

Support/policy: All the replying institutions are supportive. Several institutions, however, are not able financially substantiate this verbal support.

Support/level of university leadership: It appears that all relevant players are involved to a similar degree.

Support/activities: The hosting and staging of events and activities is carried out as part of the institutions encompassing approach and philosophy

Support/information: Though it clearly represents the number one topic within International Higher Education, information on the Bologna Process remains hard to access and tap on to.



Survey \ Dos

Communication & project organisation

- time for social events and **getting to know each other**
- face to face meetings
- **vital that the group agrees on a clearly defined goal of the program**
- the role of the **key players** is often underlined: Reduce complexity by naming one contact person per partner
- **establish a communication structure:** when and how do you communicate – regularity is pivotal!
- **communication and information** policy – effective, transparent and easily accessible information and publication strategy
- specify the partners' **responsibilities and involvement** (or level of involvement) from the outset



Survey \ Dos

Local anchoring

- **take legal prerequisites into account:** take care of the varying legal situations in the partner countries
- **take local prerequisites into account** (what are the procedures to modify a curriculum, etc)
- make sure you can count on the thorough **support** from and **commitment** of the universities involved

Quality

- define and agree upon **quality standards** and means and procedures of quality assessment
- vital: **feedback of students** as a continuous quality and reality check



Survey \ Don'ts

- Do not start with **too ambitious plans**
- Do not underestimate **practical and/or bureaucratic differences**
- Do not underestimate **differences in concept and terminology across Europe**
- Do not automatically assume identical or even similar **points of departure** in terms of experience, structure, commitment
- Do not forget to **involve all teaching staff** concerned and keep them motivated and check up on their commitment on a regular basis



Survey \ Don'ts

- Do not underestimate the **momentum** (or lack of it ...) given by your own students to the project and its realization.
- Do not neglect **publicity** and the necessity of widely spreading the word of your program – make sure you address potential students!
- Do not forget that the **students** (and not the professors or the institutions) **should be the main beneficiaries of the project**



Round up

Need to closely link Joint Degree Programmes to local Bologna process

-> drive integration

->Joint degrees drive innovation

Institutional support sometimes insufficient

> Need for improved information and communication structures; otherwise JD might remain lip service

-> new ideas established in changing orgas

Joint Degrees can be envisioned as a Bologna microcosm: ideas can unfold, they encapsulate Bologna essence

Full potential will be played out when Bologna is fully implemented



for further information :

www.univie.ac.at/bologna-lab

UNICA Manual on Joint Degrees 1.0
