

Planning and implementation of international joint degree programmes/degrees and diplomas

A degree that is part of the Finnish higher education degree system is always awarded by a Finnish higher education institution. The awarding institution is responsible for the quality of the degree and ensures that it meets the set criteria. When Finnish higher education institutions award Finnish degrees, the legislation applicable to Finnish degrees and any internal regulations of the higher education institutions are complied with in all matters related to education provision and awarding of degrees. Education delivered in international cooperation must fall within the institution's educational responsibility.

- Section 3, subsection 2 of the Government Decree on University Degrees and Professional Specialisation (794/2004): *“Education leading to a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree may be provided in the form of international cooperation. Education leading to a degree may also be provided in the form of education leading to one or more degrees together with one or more Finnish or foreign universities.”*
- Section 1, subsection 3 of Government Decree on Universities of Applied Sciences (1129/2014): *“Degree education can be provided in international cooperation. Education leading to a degree may also be provided in the form of education leading to one or more degrees together with one or more foreign higher education institutions or Finnish universities of applied sciences.”*

When education leading to a Master's degree at a university or a university of applied sciences is organised in international cooperation, Finnish higher education institutions can, by their decision, determine the scope of the degree as follows:

- Section 13 of the Government Decree Amending the Government Decree on University Degrees and Professional Specialisation (1295/2019): *“A university may also decide that the scope of studies required for a Master's degree organised in international cooperation is 60 or 90 credits instead of 120 credits, with the exception of degrees that are a particular eligibility requirement for a specific profession or position under an act or a decree. The university shall organise education programmes leading to a degree whose scope is 60 credits in such a way that a full-time student can complete the degree in one academic year, and education programmes leading to a degree whose scope is 90 credits in such a way that a full-time student can complete the degree in one and a half academic years.”*
- Section 3 of the Government Decree on Universities of Applied Sciences (1294/2019): *“The scope of studies leading to a Master's degree is 60 or 90 credits. If this degree is organised in international cooperation, the scope of the studies may also be 120 credits, as decided by the university of applied sciences.”*

From the perspective of the recognition of degrees, it is important that a joint degree programme leads to a qualification that conforms with the degree system of at least one of the participating countries. If several degrees are awarded to graduates from the programme, the status of each awarded degree in the national higher education degree system of each country should be determined.

Diplomas

The participating higher education institutions must jointly decide which and what type of diplomas and other certificates will be awarded for a degree completed in an international joint programme. If the higher

education institutions issue a joint diploma, the participating institutions should make a decision on its content, signatories and layout, taking into account the national legal conditions of all the awarding institutions and any policies that individual higher education institutions may have.

- Provisions on Finnish universities' diplomas are laid down in section 26 of the Government Decree on University Degrees and Professional Specialisation (794/2004). The following provisions on foreign language degrees are laid down in section 26, subsections 3 and 4 of the Decree: *“A Finnish or Swedish language diploma and, in addition to the Finnish or Swedish degree title specified in the annex, the English degree title so specified, is also issued for a degree completed in a language other than Finnish or Swedish in accordance with subsection 2 of section 11 of the Universities Act. If, in accordance with subsection 2 of section 3, education leading to a degree has been arranged in the form of education leading to one or more degrees together with one or more Finnish or foreign universities, then the diploma shall specify the other degrees and diplomas issued on the basis of the same education and the other universities that issue the degree.”*
- Provisions on diplomas awarded by Finnish universities of applied sciences are laid down in section 10 of the Government Decree on Universities of Applied Sciences (1129/2014). The following provisions on foreign language degrees are contained in section 10, subsections 1 and 2 of this Decree: *“... A Finnish or Swedish language diploma and, in addition to the Finnish or Swedish degree title specified in the annex, the English degree title referred to in it, is also issued for a degree completed in a language other than Finnish or Swedish. If, in accordance with subsection 3 of section 1, education leading to a degree has been arranged in the form of education leading to one or more degrees together with one or more Finnish or foreign higher education institutions, the diploma shall specify the other degrees and diplomas issued on the basis of the same education and the other higher education institutions that issue the degree.”*

The Finnish higher education institution issues a diploma to those of its students to whom it has granted a study right for the degree in question and who have completed their studies in compliance with the requirements. A diploma may only be issued for a degree that the Finnish higher education institution in question has the right to award. National legislation notwithstanding, the diploma can be awarded by, in addition to one or more Finnish higher education institutions, also by a foreign higher education institution(s).

In addition to a diploma issued in the language of the degree, a Finnish higher education institution must always issue a diploma in its own statutory language of instruction and degrees, in other words Finnish or Swedish.

The diploma issued in the language of the degree may be a common foreign language diploma issued jointly with the other higher education institutions participating in the joint degree programme. The diploma may also be bilingual or multilingual, containing the same content in the language of the joint degree programme, in Finnish or Swedish, and possibly in other languages.

In addition to diploma(s), another certificate can be issued to a graduate from the joint degree programme as additional information. This, however, would not be a diploma referred to in Finnish legislation.

The diploma(s) must clearly indicate that the degree programme was a joint one, and it must list all the degrees awarded in the programme and the parties that awarded them. The diploma(s) must additionally cite any other diplomas that may be issued for the same studies. Details of completed studies and other additional information should be contained in a Diploma Supplement.

Diploma Supplement

To support the work of higher education institutions, the Finnish National Agency for Education has issued guidelines for preparing a Diploma Supplement for degrees completed in Finland. These guidelines also cover joint degrees. <https://www.oph.fi/fi/korkeakoulututkintotodistuksen-liite-tietoa-korkeakoululle>.