

## University Of Glasgow

## Academic Standards Committee – Friday 14 February 2014

## Establishment of a Minimum Threshold for the Contribution of a Partner Leading to the Award of Joint or Double/Multiple Degrees

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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1. ASC has previously considered and agreed<sup>1</sup> a policy regarding the minimum amount of study/research to be carried out at UoG, required of a student in a joint<sup>2</sup> or double/multiple<sup>3</sup> degree collaboration in order to receive an award of the University (whether taught or by research). This policy is as follows:
- a. Study at the University is defined as:
    - i. the amount of credit gained for Undergraduate and PGT study and,
    - ii. the amount of supervision for PGR, where the UoG Supervisor is first or co-supervisor.
  - b. The University will not award a degree where the student did not study at the University. The student should be registered to study at the University but does not need to be present on campus.
  - c. For the award of a University of Glasgow degree, students should normally have studied:
    - i. at least 50% with the University of Glasgow where there is one partner.
    - ii. where there are more than two partners, the minimum amount of study should be proportionate to the number of institutions at which the student studied, with an absolute minimum limit of 25% of study at Glasgow
  - d. For research programmes, degrees should only be awarded where the student has at least one UoG supervisor, making a substantial input.
- 1.2. The current policy, however, **does not specify a minimum threshold for the input of a partner** for the award of a joint or double/multiple degree, a situation that was encountered last session for the first time where there was some concern over the level of contribution of a partner to a proposed double degree arrangement.

**2. Practice elsewhere in the sector**

- 2.1. As a result of these concerns, some research was undertaken to establish practice at other institutions. No institution has a policy or guidance that specifies a threshold for the level of input of the partner institution (minimum – maximum) to qualify as a joint or double award. One institution has indicated that they would expect their input to be a 'significant contribution to the programme' but this is not defined. Three institutions, have indicated that they do not have a formal policy but 'in practice'

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<sup>1</sup> Initially approved in November 2010 and updated October 2012

<sup>2</sup> The University and the partner institution(s) jointly develop and deliver a programme leading to a **single award** from the participating institutions.

<sup>3</sup> Where two or more awarding institutions collectively provide a jointly-delivered programme (or programmes) leading to **separate awards** being granted by both, or all of them.

- have delivered at least one year of a three year programme in joint/ double arrangements.
- do not have any arrangements where the amount is less than 25% and most are 50%
- tend to split approx. 50-50 and unlikely to be comfortable with something being a joint award if one partner contributed less than a third
- have left it flexible on both sides

2.2. A number of respondents indicated that they can award double and or joint degrees but have not yet done so. Consequently, there is no clear policy elsewhere in the sector but there is informal practice.

### 3. Proposed Amendment to Policy

3.1. In order to provide clear guidance on the minimum expected input of a partner for the award of a joint or double/multiple degree **it is proposed** that UoG establishes a minimum threshold as follows (additions to the existing policy proposal indicated in coloured columns).

	Minimum contribution of UoG where one partner	<b>Minimum contribution of partner where one partner</b>	Minimum contribution of UoG where more than one partner	<b>Minimum contribution of a partner where more than one partner</b>
Joint degree	50%	<b>40%</b>	25%	<b>25%</b>
Double degree	50%	<b>33%</b>	-	-
Multiple degree	-	-	25%	<b>20%</b>

3.2. These thresholds are in keeping with informal sector practice.

3.3. A different threshold is proposed for a joint degree as the expectation is approximate parity of contribution - less than this would be allowing a partner to gain ownership of what is largely a UoG degree. This is a concern, particularly if the partner is not bringing any significant content to the table.

3.4. Although the threshold is lower for a double or multiple degree, from a quality perspective, UoG will be assuring its own award. The partner has responsibility for assuring the quality of their award and if they choose to accredit a large proportion of prior learning from UoG, that is for them to manage and assure.

3.5. It is possible that there may be more than one pathway through a joint or double/multiple degree. In such cases, **it is proposed** that the 'norm' should be consistent with the thresholds above. However, should the percentage contribution of a partner on any one pathway be at variance with these thresholds then it is proposed that this would need to be considered on a case by case basis, with strong justification provided in support.

3.6. Again, where strong justification is provided, **it is proposed** that there may be some departure from the above thresholds for the contribution of partners'. Any proposed departures would need to be considered on a case by case basis and agreed by ASC. Justification for such a departure might arise, for example, where joint arrangements are entered into to support capacity building in other parts of the world

- 3.7. Where the University is involved in the joint delivery of programme with an institution that does not have degree awarding powers (eg UoG has a number of jointly delivered programmes with the Glasgow School of Art) **it is proposed** that for any new programmes reference should be made to the thresholds above at the development phase as guidance but do not need to be strictly adhered to. In this scenario, UoG will be the sole awarding institution and will ultimately be responsible for academic standards and quality assurance. However, it is possible that a validated institution could achieve its own degree awarding powers in the future and the issue of a jointly awarded or double degree might arise. By taking account of the thresholds at the development stage of the joint delivery of programme, there would be more straight-forward transition to a joint or double award should this circumstance arise.
- 3.8. If approved, and following the introduction of the new policy, any existing arrangements that are not compliant, would be encouraged to work towards bringing the programme into line with the agreed thresholds at the next partnership review, which is held in the year prior the expiry date of the Memorandum of Agreement governing the degree.

#### **4. Action Required**

- 4.1. ASC is **invited to note** that the Deans of Graduate Studies Committee and the Research Planning and Strategy Committee have been consulted on the paper and are satisfied with the proposed thresholds. RPSC requested that some flexibility be allowed and paragraph 3.6 has been included to accommodate this.
- 4.2. **ASC is asked to approve:**
- i) the amendment of the existing policy to introduce a minimum threshold for the contribution of a partner leading to the award of joint or double/multiple degrees as detailed in paragraph 3.1 above.
  - ii) where there is more than one pathway through a joint or double/ multiple degree, that the 'norm' should be consistent with the thresholds.
  - iii) that there may be some departure from the above thresholds for the contribution of partners where strong justification is provided. Any proposed departures will need to be considered on a case by case basis by ASC.
  - iv) where the University is involved in the joint delivery of programme with an institution that does not have degree awarding powers, that any new programmes should take cognisance of the thresholds but do not need to be strictly adhered to them.