



**GUIDE TO
DEVELOPING
AND RUNNING**

**JOINT DEGREE
PROGRAMMES**

**AT BACHELOR
AND MASTER'S
LEVEL**

**AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF
BERGEN**

**Division of Student Affairs,
University of Bergen, May, 2013**

This guide provides information and describes procedures relating to different stages of the work on joint programmes and degrees at Bachelor and Master level at the University of Bergen (UiB). It is based on and in line with the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions' (UHR) "Handbook on joint degree cooperation". Most of the information is relevant to both national and international joint programmes and degrees, while some information relates specifically to international degrees. The guide is intended for academic and administrative staff working with or planning to work with joint degrees.

The procedures described were approved by the Director of Student Affairs on 8 May 2008, and subsequently communicated to UiB's six faculties.

The Guide is divided into six parts:

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Appendix 2. Excerpt from *Regulations relating to controlling educational quality in higher education of February 28, 2013*

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 UiB ON JOINT DEGREES

UiB's management has on several occasions discussed the work on joint degrees and internationalisation of studies¹.

From the *Strategic plan 2011-2015 for the University of Bergen*:

International cooperation must to a larger extent become an integrated part of all the university's activities and involve all parts of the organisation; students, researchers and technical and administrative staff, departments, faculties, university management and administrative departments. This means active cooperation with international institutions, through networks, projects, between researchers or research groups.

The University of Bergen has as its main goal for education: to offer international recognised research-based education of high academic quality and with focus on cultural perspectives, critical thinking and ethical consciousness,

From the *Action plan for international activities at the University of Bergen 2011-2015*:

The University of Bergen's strategy assumes that there is still much focus on further developing the international dimension of research, education and administration. This action plan presents actions which will promote this, with special emphasis on the core activities research and education.

UiB will assist and advice in the establishment and management of joint degrees at the Master's and Ph.D. level in subject areas where joint degrees can support strategic research cooperation and ensure students a better and more international education. Goal: award degrees in cooperation with important network partners. Responsible: SA, FA and department.

From a meeting of UiB's *Educational Committee*, 6 December 2005, Item 98/05 on the Bologna process and joint degrees:

Study programmes that are developed in collaboration between two or more education institutions, Norwegian or international, have existed for a long time, although of a modest scope and using different terminology. What is new, is that study programmes and programme descriptions developed in collaboration with other institutions in Norway or elsewhere, can lead to a joint degree. Till now, the institutions have concentrated on joint degrees at a higher level (Master's level). This has been a problem for Norwegian university colleges, since they are not entitled to establish Master's degree programmes without accreditation by NOKUT. There is a great deal of contract-based collaboration on teaching between Norwegian education institutions but few discussions on formal joint degrees.

The Education Committee would like:

- UiB to outline a clear strategic framework for such collaboration
- information about such collaboration to be easily accessible
- the academic communities to be given the necessary support to develop and operate such collaborations
- joint degrees to also include national collaboration

Decision:

The committee took note of the matter and requests that the views be forwarded to the advisory committee for the Vice-Rector for International Relations.

¹ Unofficial translations by the Division of Student Affairs, UiB, of the Strategic Plan, the Action Plan and Committee item.

1.2 INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Joint degrees have been more or less on the agenda since the Bologna process started in 1999. The following Bologna documents refer directly to joint degrees:

'TOWARDS THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA', Communiqué of the meeting of European Ministers in charge of Higher Education in Prague on 19 May 2001:

Promotion of the European dimensions in higher education

In order to further strengthen the important European dimensions of higher education and graduate employability Ministers called upon the higher education sector to increase the development of modules, courses and curricula at all levels with "European" content, orientation or organisation. This concerns particularly modules, courses and degree curricula offered in partnership by institutions from different countries and leading to a recognized joint degree.

In order to take the process further, Ministers encouraged the follow-up group to arrange seminars to explore the following areas: cooperation concerning accreditation and quality assurance, recognition issues and the use of credits in the Bologna process, the development of joint degrees ...

'Realising the European Higher Education Area', *Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education in Berlin on 19 September 2003*:

Promotion of the European dimension in higher education

Ministers note that, following their call in Prague, additional modules, courses and curricula with European content, orientation or organisation are being developed.

They note that initiatives have been taken by Higher Education Institutions in various European countries to pool their academic resources and cultural traditions in order to promote the development of integrated study programmes² and joint degrees at first, second and third level.

Moreover, they stress the necessity of ensuring a substantial period of study abroad in joint degree programmes as well as proper provision for linguistic diversity and language learning, so that students may achieve their full potential for European identity, citizenship and employability.

Ministers agree to engage at the national level to remove legal obstacles to the establishment and recognition of such degrees and to actively support the development and adequate quality assurance of integrated curricula leading to joint degrees.

'The European Higher Education Area - Achieving the Goals', *Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Bergen, 19-20 May 2005*:

We express support for the subsidiary texts to the Lisbon Recognition Convention and call upon all national authorities and other stakeholders to recognise joint degrees awarded in two or more countries in the EHEA.

In particular, we shall look for progress in:

- the awarding and recognition of joint degrees, including at the doctorate level;...

² In this context 'integrated study programmes' refers to joint study programmes. On the other hand, an integrated Master's degree at UiB refers to a five-year Master's degree with no intermediate degree awarded - <http://termbase.uhr.no/index.php?q=integrert+program>

'Towards the European Higher Education Area: responding to challenges in a globalised world', *Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, London, 17-18 May 2007*:

At national level, we will work to implement fully the agreed recognition tools and procedures and consider ways of further incentivising mobility for both staff and students. This includes encouraging a significant increase in the number of joint programmes and the creation of flexible curricula, as well as urging our institutions to take greater responsibility for staff and student mobility, more equitably balanced between countries across the EHEA.

1.3 CENTRAL CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

1.3.1 JOINT STUDY PROGRAMME

There are several alternative definitions/models of joint study programmes:

1. A joint study programme refers to situations where two or more institutions collaborate on a joint study programme, but where each institution is responsible for admission and awarding of degrees to its own students. The programme is developed and managed jointly, but each institution "owns" its own students.
2. A joint study programme refers to situations when two or more institutions cooperate on a joint study programme that leads to a degree at one of the partner institutions.

Two or more institutions collaborate on a study programme leading up to a degree at one of the institutions. One institution is responsible for the degree and issues the degree diploma. This institution has academic responsibility for the contents of the study programme. The course descriptions must be approved by the institution that issues the degree, and this institution is responsible for assessing the basis for the diploma in relation to the descriptions of learning outcome in the programme description. The institution issuing the diploma is responsible for academic approval of the course and for the quality of the programme.

If one or more of the institutions that are part of the collaboration is not accredited for the programme of study in question, this institution is not required to apply for accreditation of its own contribution to the programme. It is a precondition that the institution issuing the degree has been accredited for courses at the relevant degree level. (Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions-UHR Handbook on joint degree cooperation)³

While collaboration on a joint study programme is less of a commitment than a joint degree, many of the same academic, administrative and practical challenges must be discussed and solved by the partner institutions.

1.3.2 JOINT DEGREES

A joint degree refers to a collaboration between two or more institutions on a joint study programme leading to a joint degree. This means that all partner institutions are responsible for the entire programme and not just their own separate parts. A joint degree can be documented by issuing a joint diploma, a joint diploma plus two or more

³ http://www.uhr.no/documents/En_h_ndbok_for_fellegradssamarbeid_rev_2009_2_.pdf

institutional diplomas, or two or more institutional diplomas. This is in line with the definition in the Lisboa Convention, which Norway ratified in 1999.

Lisboa Convention:

A joint degree should be understood as referring to a higher education qualification issued jointly by at least two or more higher education institutions on the basis of a joint study programme.

A joint degree may be issued as

- a. A joint diploma in addition to one or more national diplomas
- b. A joint diploma issued by the institutions offering the study programme in question without accompanied by any national diploma
- c. One or more national diplomas issued officially as the only attestation of the joint qualification in question.

The Erasmus Mundus programme uses a more narrow definition of what constitutes a joint degree:

A double or multiple degree is defined as two or more nationally recognised diplomas issued officially by two or more institutions involved in an integrated study programme. A joint degree is defined as a single diploma issued by at least two of the institutions offering an integrated study programme.

If a Norwegian university college is to participate in a joint degree, its contribution must be accredited by the *Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT)*.

1.3.3 COTUTELLE / JOINT PHD DEGREE

A cotutelle is an individual contract for joint academic supervision at PhD level that regulates the partners' responsibilities, also with regard to evaluation and defence of doctoral theses. In a report on joint degrees and cotutelle from 30 June 2007, the *Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR)* gave the following description of a cotutelle:

A cotutelle agreement is individual. A personal agreement for each PhD candidate will always be required. Additional institutional agreements, national agreements or framework agreements on cotutelle can still be formulated, referring to general procedures and systems. Quality assurance, admission, assessment and diplomas are aspects such agreements could naturally cover.

A joint PhD degree must contain joint supervision, but it can also entail collaboration on joint research training. In the Erasmus Mundus II programme, it is possible to apply for joint PhD programmes.

1.4 ADDED VALUE OF JOINT DEGREES

Establishing joint degrees consists of far more than entering into a contract. It involves developing a new study programme and a new arena for knowledge. The prime objective of establishing joint degrees should be to improve the quality of the education and research the degree encompasses. The result of two or more institutions joining forces to offer a study programme should be a programme of a higher academic standard than the institutions would achieve separately. In other words, joint degrees can lead to the following added values:

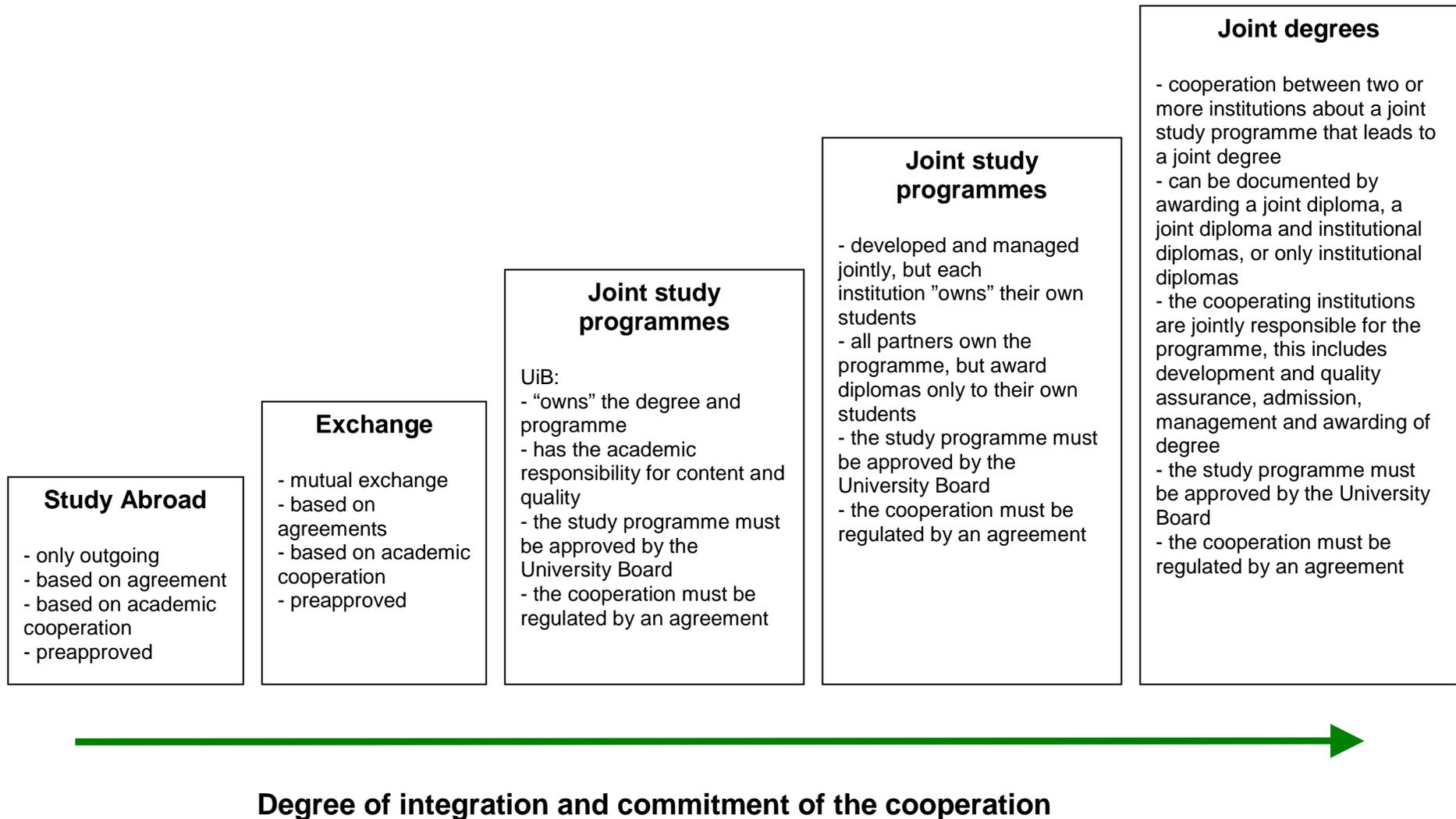
- Increase internationalisation at the institutions

- Stimulate multinational collaboration on teaching at a high level and make cooperation binding
- Increase transparency between educational systems
- Develop study and research alternatives in accordance with emerging needs
- Improve educational and research collaboration
- Offer students an expanded and innovative arena for learning
- Increase highly educated candidates' employability and motivation for mobility in a global labour market
- Increase non-European students' interest in the educational programme
- Increase competence at partner institutions through cooperation and implementation of a best practice system
- Increase the institution's ability to change in step with emerging needs
- Contribute to tearing down cultural barriers, both personal and institutional

1.5 LEGAL BASIS FOR JOINT DEGREES

- *Act relating to Universities and University Colleges*, 4 April 2005, section 3-2: 'The Ministry may issue regulations concerning a national framework for qualifications and objectives for degree courses and professional training courses in collaboration with other institutions.'
- *Act relating to Universities and University Colleges*, 4 April 2005, section 3-3: 'Institutions accredited as universities have the authority to decide themselves which study courses and disciplines the institution shall provide and which will form part of the basis of a degree or professional training course established pursuant to section 3-2.'
- *Regulations relating to quality assurance and quality enhancement in higher education and tertiary vocational education of February 1 2010*, section 4-1: 'Universities and university colleges can award degrees and professional training in collaboration with other Norwegian or international institutions (joint degrees).'

Figure 1: International educational cooperation



2. ASSESSMENT STAGE

2.1 GOOD ADVICE AND IMPORTANT FACTORS WHEN PLANNING JOINT DEGREES

The following advice is based on the *European University Association's* (EUA) 'Golden rules for new joint Masters Programmes' from the rapport 'Developing Joint Masters Programmes for Europe' and adjusted to the situation at UiB.

(http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/Joint_Masters_report.1087219975578.pdf)

- **Know why you wish to set up a joint study programme.** What makes it unique? Joint degree collaboration should result in the development of a study programme that is unique and of high academic quality. It should be a programme that UiB could not offer on its own.
- **Choose partners with the utmost care.** It is an advantage if the academic communities that want to establish a joint degree already have a good working relationship. Academic communities are encouraged to build on existing relations with strong international partners in their academic fields. Key factors in the choice of partners are familiarity with the partners (knowledge of their academic strengths), resources, reliability (both formal accreditation and reputation), and determination to carry out the programme. It is important to not only include academic considerations but also the administrative capacity of the potential partners. The more partners, the harder it may be to coordinate collaboration. For the Erasmus Mundus programme, at least three European partners are required, in addition to prospective partners from other continents.⁴ Does a specific collaboration have the potential to expand to other academic communities at UiB (synergy effect) and is there any interest in such expansion?
- **Ensure that the proposed collaboration has a firm academic and administrative foundation at all levels in the institution.**
- **Establish the partners' responsibilities and make sure that sufficient academic and administrative resources are available, both at your own institution and at partner institutions.** It is an advantage to know the national and local laws and regulations relating to joint degrees, both for and at UiB and partner institutions. At this stage, the partners should also clarify who is to lead the consortium.
- **Carry out a resource assessment.** Financial aspects should be part of the agreement between the collaborating institutions. Funds should be set aside for meetings during the planning stage.
- **Plan and organise sufficient meeting points in advance.** Planning a joint degree has to be done properly and it takes time. Regular meetings, telephone conferences and the like should also take place when the joint degree is up and running, both for academic staff and administrators. Regular meetings contribute to trust, fellowship, commitment and good partnership across institutional and national borders.
- **Discuss objectives for the programme and expected learning outcomes.**
- **Develop a plan for recruitment and marketing.**
- **Be in dialogue and be flexible at all involved institutions.**

⁴ More information about application criteria for the Erasmus Mundus programme can be found at: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/programme/programme_guide_en.php

2.2 RECOMMENDED CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING WHETHER OR NOT TO ENTER INTO A JOINT DEGREE COLLABORATION

The *Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR)* recommends that the following criteria should be considered when assessing whether or not the university should enter into a joint degree collaboration⁵:

- Joint degrees should be relevant to society and working life.
- Joint degrees should be in accordance with the strategic and academic priorities of the university and its academic communities.
- Joint degrees should be within an academic field where the university has relevant competence.
- Joint degrees should stimulate increased student mobility, also amongst the university's own students.
- Joint degrees should stimulate increased transparency between the academic communities and increase competence through reciprocal learning outcomes.
- Joint degrees should strengthen research-based teaching.
- Joint degrees should strengthen collaboration on research and development projects.
- Joint degrees should include teacher mobility.
- Joint degrees should be supported by the academic community and by the institution.
- Academic, administrative and economic resources must be available.

2.3 CHECKLIST FOR THE ASSESSMENT STAGE

- Know why you are developing the study programme
- Choose your partners with the utmost care
- Ensure academic and administrative support
- Meet to discuss challenges
- Divide responsibility
- Secure financial resources
- Plan sufficient meeting points
- Develop well-defined objectives for the programme
- Address recruitment and marketing
- Use UHR's recommended criteria for assessing whether or not to enter into collaboration

⁵ From UHR's report on joint degrees and cotutelle, 30 June 2007, pages 13-14:
http://www.uhr.no/documents/Rapport_om_fellesgrader_og_cotutelle.pdf

- When the academic community finds collaboration relevant and wishes to develop it further, information about the work should be sent to the faculty with a copy to the Division of Student Affairs.

3. DEVELOPMENT STAGE

3.1 WHAT TO DO DURING THE DEVELOPMENT STAGE

- The department should **name local representatives** to the consortium.
- The partner institutions should sign a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**, which affirms the partners' intention to develop a joint degree. An application for financial support (be it Erasmus Mundus, Nordplus or Erasmus) can function as a MoU. The Division of Student Affairs has also produced a template that can be obtained by contacting the division.
- It must be **ensured that the partner institutions are accredited**. This is in accordance with the *Regulations relating to quality assurance and quality enhancement in higher education and tertiary vocational education of February 1 2010*, which states in section 4-2:

Section 4-2. Requirements for joint degrees – the responsibilities of the institutions

(2) The institution must ensure that the collaborating institutions are accredited or officially approved for the provision of higher education in accordance with applicable systems in the country in question, and that the relevant studies are accredited as higher education at the level of the joint degree.

- **Financial and administrative consequences and strains should be clarified** by the faculty, department and consortium as early as possible. The cost estimate should include both development and operating costs. What incomes and outcomes one can expect, and how these should be divided, must be discussed.
- If the partner institutions wish to charge **tuition fees**, one should discuss whether all students should pay the same amount or whether to differentiate between European and non-European students. *UiB cannot charge tuition fees from students and nor can it receive such financial support indirectly through the partner institutions*. If UiB is coordinator, the partner institutions must discuss how tuition fees shall be collected and distributed amongst the partner institutions. UiB can collect tuition fees on behalf of its partner institutions. However, in some instances it may be more natural for one of the other institutions to do this, especially if only one of the participating institutions is charging tuition fees.

3.2 ELEMENTS THAT MUST BE DISCUSSED DURING THE DEVELOPMENT STAGE

During the development stage the department must, first of all, name local representatives to the consortium. Next, it is especially important to secure internal approval of the study programme at UiB (programme and course description) and get an agreement signed by all partner institutions regarding the running of the joint degree. In this process, the department should clarify the following (this also has to be clarified before sending an application for external financial support):

3.2.1 PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

1. **Scope of the Master's degree.** According to the *Regulations concerning requirements for a master's degree*, 1 December 2005, a Master's degree requires 120 credits (equals two years of full-time study in accordance with ECTS). An experience-based Master's degree requires 90 to 120 credits. In special cases, exemption can be granted by the Ministry of Education and Research. The Division of Student Affairs functions as case officer for such applications.
2. **Scope of the independent work.** According to the *Regulations concerning requirements for a Master's degree*, 1 December 2005, the independent work (Master's thesis) requires a minimum of 30 credits and a maximum of 60 credits. This will also be the case when Norwegian institutions collaborate with international institutions to offer joint degrees.
3. **Scope of the courses**, the teaching language, adjustment of the study programme to the different institutions' semester periods.
4. **Discussions of evaluation and teaching methods.** Issues related to teaching, deciding grades, technical errors in connection with exams and the like are the responsibility of the institution with academic responsibility for the module. It is that institution's regulations for exams and appeals that shall apply. Appeals about grading or technical errors in connection with exams will be the responsibility of the respective authority in the country responsible for examination coordination. UiB is obliged to use the assessment descriptions set out in the *Act relating to Universities and University Colleges* (pass/fail or the alphabetical grade scale A-F). It is likely that the collaborating institutions use different grading systems. It is desirable that the grades are stated in both the original system and converted to the ECTS system⁶, but, on Norway's part, we must be aware of the fact that the use of the grade scale A-F is qualitative/'criterion-based' (the ECTS scale is used relatively⁷). This means that the grading systems must be described in detail in the Diploma Supplement (DS) section 8. The collaborating institutions must consider whether to issue a separate DS for each institution or whether a joint DS should be prepared. It is important to provide the students with detailed information about any differences in grading and assessment.
5. Where are the students going to spend the different semesters? Should **student mobility** be organised through a fixed or an optional system? The *Regulations relating to quality assurance and quality enhancement in higher education and tertiary vocational education of February 1 2010* states in section 4-2 that the "students must be ensured periods of study of a certain length at the collaborating institutions".⁸
6. Elements of the programme description:
 - a) Name of the degree (in the case of a joint degree: if several national diplomas are issued, the degree may have different names) and name of the study programme
 - b) Learning objectives
 - c) The programmes' relevance (to society, work etc.)

⁶ This is in accordance with the recommendations of the European Commission: *The performance of the student is documented by a local/national grade. It is good practice to add an ECTS grade, in particular in case of credit transfer. The ECTS grading scale ranks the students on a statistical basis.*

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/index_en.html

⁷ The ECTS Users' Guide, Brussels 6 February 2009 - http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc48_en.htm

⁸ The students do not trigger 'mobility funds' for UiB if their stay at another institution is shorter than three months, cf. the financing model for higher education in Norway.

- d) Content, language of instruction
- e) Expected learning outcome on completion of the programme (knowledge, skills and general competence) and qualifications
- f) The academic structure of the study programme (courses/modules, study progress, specialisation if relevant)
- g) Admission requirements and requirements for study progress
- h) Compulsory requirements for the study programme (for example, the Master's thesis)
- i) ECTS credits and students' workload
- j) Teaching methods/pedagogy and syllabus
- k) Assessments and the grading scales used at the respective partner institutions
- l) Evaluation of the study programme
- m) Place of study for the different courses (in accordance with section 4-2 (3) of the *Regulations relating to quality assurance and quality enhancement in higher education and tertiary vocational education of February 1 2010*)
- n) Mobility model (student and teacher mobility)
- o) Achieved competence in relation to further studies or work opportunities
- p) Contact information

The programme description must meet the standards in *Framework for Qualifications of European Higher Education Area* and the requirements in the *National Qualification Framework for Higher Education*.⁹

3.2.2 ADMISSION PROCEDURES

1. When formulating joint admission criteria, the partner institutions must be aware that some institutions may have stricter laws and less flexibility. To issue degrees, Norwegian institutions must follow Norwegians laws and regulations relating to admission and the scope of the education. The admission criteria must be in accordance with UiB's ordinary requirements for admission to a Master's degree. Exemptions can be granted in cases where it is necessary to adjust the study programme to fit all the participating institutions (see *Regulations relating to degrees and programmes of study at the University of Bergen*).

In formulating admission criteria for Master's degrees, the following problems should be taken into account:

- a) The length/scope of a Bachelor's degree varies from country to country.
 - b) The demand for 80 credits for in-depth study in a Bachelor's degree can be hard to achieve for applicants from countries with a more interdisciplinary Bachelor education.¹⁰
2. One should clarify which requirements regarding documentation, motivational letter (regarding the student's motivation for applying to the programme), references and, if relevant, (telephone) interview the cooperating institutions want to have.
 3. The partner institutions must also agree on admission procedures and application deadlines. The deadline must take into account whether international students are to be recruited (which often calls for an early deadline) and/or Norwegian/Nordic

⁹ http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/kd/tema/hoyere_utdanning/europeisk-kvalifikasjonsrammeverk.html?id=564809

¹⁰ Cf. Section 3 of the *Regulations concerning requirements for Master's degrees of 1 Dec. 2005* issued by the Ministry of Education and Research, and *Regulations relating to degrees and programmes of study at the University of Bergen*, chapt. 5, section 33.

students (which often calls for a late deadline). In addition, limitations on the coordinator's part (workload, IT systems etc.) could influence the process.

4. Often, but not always, it is natural that the coordinating institution is responsible for the practical implementation of the admission process, while the decision regarding who shall be admitted is reached jointly by the academic staff (this does not necessarily mean that they have to meet in person). A common application form (preferably electronic) can be a useful tool.

UiB recommends that admission be carried out jointly by the partner institutions and with common criteria for admission. This underpins the idea of joint responsibility for the study programme. UiB also recommends that the partner institutions agree upon appeal procedures.

3.2.3 ENROLLMENT AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS

1. Enrollment/registration of students admitted to a joint programme. The *Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR)* recommends, in a report on joint degrees and cotutelle of 30 June 2007, that:

If a joint diploma is to be issued on the basis of a joint degree programme, the student must be registered at all partner institutions. It is important that all institutions in a consortium document what candidates they have contributed to qualifying through a joint diploma, even if the student has not stayed at all institutions in the consortium.

If institutional diplomas are to be issued by each institution at which the student has had a period of study, it is sufficient that the student is registered at those respective institutions. In that case, the other institutions in the consortium do not formally approve the degree through a joint diploma. The collaboration must still be evident through the diplomas issued. This can be an alternative in situations with numerous participants in the consortium.¹¹

In other words, when joint diplomas are issued, all students shall be registered for admission at all partner institutions irrespective of whether or not they physically stay there. When institutional diplomas are issued, the students are registered only at the institutions at which they have periods of study. In the first case, the students should be registered with admission to all partner institutions for the entire duration of the programme, even if they only have periods of study at some institutions. The idea is that, in a joint degree, all partner institutions are responsible for the students and the entire study programme and all students are degree students at the respective institutions.

2. Follow-up of students, rules for leaves of absence, procedures regarding lack of study progress, appeal procedures relating to admissions and the organisation of academic supervision etc. must be discussed. Who is responsible for receiving and processing applications for leaves of absence; is it the institution where the student is at the moment or is it the coordinating institution? A coordinating institution should be responsible for follow-up in cooperation with others. The different partners should be informed about the different institutional procedures, so that they can all recognise the procedures at the respective institutions. If possible, strategies, procedures and guidelines should be jointly formulated in order to ensure the best follow-up.
3. Student arrival, housing, student welfare etc.
4. Responsibility for and organisation of information/marketing of the programme.

¹¹ An unofficial translation by the Division of Student Affairs, UiB. The original text can be found at: http://www.uhr.no/documents/Rapport_om_fellesgrader_og_cotutelle.pdf

3.2.4 DIPLOMA

The type of diploma (joint and/or national), diploma design, the content of the Diploma Supplement, and clarify any national restrictions relating to the issuing of diplomas. Which country's principles for diplomas will be used when joint diplomas are issued? To what extent should the laws and regulations referred to be indicated on the diploma? Are joint diplomas to be sent between institutions to be signed by hand? What happens if individual candidates do not meet the requirements for a joint degree, for example with respect to stays at all the institutions? It must also be clarified whether the individual universities require the student to stay at the institution in order for the name of the institution to be listed on the joint diploma.

3.3 THE AGREEMENT PROCESS

The cooperation agreement should be drawn up when applying for approval for the study programme. The agreement, together with the programme and course descriptions, constitutes the contractual relationship between the partner institutions and between the students and the institutions. The process of drawing up an agreement should be started during the development stage. It takes time for the cooperating institutions to agree on the text, and one should start the work as early as possible. The agreement should be signed during the development stage or at the latest at the beginning of the management stage.

This is in accordance with the *Regulations relating to quality assurance and quality enhancement in higher education and tertiary vocational education of February 1 2010* which states:

Section 4-2. *Joint degree requirements – the institutions' responsibility*

(1) Universities and university colleges offering joint degrees shall enter into an agreement with the collaborating institutions, which regulates the parties' responsibilities, including awarding degrees and diploma design.

The Division of Student Affairs has produced a template for the academic communities to use and can also assist the academic communities with advice in the process of developing an agreement.

The content of the agreement:

The agreement shall regulate the partners' responsibilities and may contain the following points:

- Who is to function as coordinator, and whether an executive committee, a programme committee or any other kind of steering committee should be appointed. The committee's composition and mandate should be specified.
- The financial responsibilities of each partner institution.
- The structure of the programme (including its nominal length, aim/objective, language of instruction, student and teacher mobility).
- Responsibilities relating to the awarding of degrees and diploma design. This must be in accordance with the *Regulations relating to quality assurance and quality enhancement in higher education and tertiary vocational education of February 1 2010*.
- Information about admission, registration and appeal policy and procedures.
- The students' financial responsibilities.
- Quality assurance.
- If relevant, Intellectual Property Rights.

- If the agreement is entered into before the study programme is formally approved by UiB, the agreement must contain a clause/proviso stating that the agreement is only valid if the joint degree is approved by the Education Committee and the University Board.
- The date of entry into force and duration of the agreement and procedures related to amendments, renewal or termination.
- On which national laws the study programme and the consortium is to be based.

When an academic community wishes to draw up an agreement for the management of Bachelor's and Master's degrees, it must comply with the following procedures:

1. The academic community collaborates with the partner universities on drawing up the agreement. The Division of Student Affairs has prepared an agreement template for this process. The Division of Student Affairs can assist the academic staff in the process of developing an agreement. It is important that the Division of Student Affairs is involved during the process so that potential problems can be solved at an early stage and the final agreement can be signed by UiB.
2. When the agreement is ready to be signed, a request is sent to the Division of Student Affairs (SA), normally in writing from the head of department/head of centre.
3. The Division of Student Affairs will ensure that the agreement is in line with rules and procedures at UiB, and send the agreement together with short outline of the joint degree collaboration to the Rector's office.
4. The Rector's office will decide whether the proposed collaboration is in line with UiB's policy on collaborations and contracts and sign the agreement if it finds it to be so.
5. The signed agreement is returned to the Division of Student Affairs and then sent to the academic community.
6. The academic community makes sure that the original, valid agreement (i.e. signed by all collaborating partners) is filed (ePhorte) and that copies are sent to the Division of Student Affairs, the faculty and the department.
7. In principle, renewal of the agreement follows the same procedures. The academic community should contact the Division of Student Affairs six to twelve months before the agreement expires.

3.4 APPROVAL OF A JOINT DEGREE

In accordance with the quality assurance system at UiB, all new study programmes, including joint degrees and joint study programmes, must be approved by the University Board (ref. *Handbook for Quality Assurance of University Programmes of Study*), regardless of whether or not UiB's contribution to the joint degree/joint study programme consists of already existing courses or study programmes. **All joint study programmes, regardless of what type of degree will be issued upon completion of the programme, shall be approved as independent programmes according to the procedures described in the *Handbook for Quality Assurance of University Programmes of Study*. Study options as parts of already existing study programmes (studieretninger) cannot be approved as joint degrees/joint study programmes.**¹²

¹² At a meeting on 13 January 2010, the UiB Educational Committee made this ruling.

UiB's rules for approving new study programmes can be found in *Handbook for quality assurance of university programmes of study*¹³. Applications for the approval of joint degrees/joint study programmes do not have fixed deadlines, which ordinary study programmes have. However, joint degrees/joint study programmes that are being developed should be mentioned in the faculties' Report on Educational Attainment (Utdanningsmelding).

3.4.1 UiB'S PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL

The academic community

The academic community must assure that the planned joint degree programme is strongly based at and has the support of the department. The department is responsible for assuring that the programme can be managed within the regular financial budgets. *The main principle is that the costs relating to establishing a new study programme must be covered within the present financial framework.* It is necessary already at this stage to assess available resources and the resources needed to realise the new programme. This also includes lecturing and teaching rooms, reading halls and workstations. A proposal for a new study programme, including a programme description, is drawn up in collaboration between the academic community and its national/international partners and others. Usually the departmental committee will approve the application for approval of a new joint degree before it is sent to the faculty.

Application for approval of a new joint degree/joint study programme shall include:

- An assessment of the study programme's relevance, including also relevance for society at large. The application shall also show how the planned study programme is related to current research and artistic development.
- A reason for why the department wishes to establish the study programme.
- An assessment of the financial conditions and need for resources.
- An assessment of how the approval of the new programme can/will influence the size of the department's total portfolio of study programmes.
- A description of objectives and learning outcomes that the student will have upon completion of the programme.
- Programme description according to the UiB template (the programme description can be written in English).

The department

The academic staff sends the proposal for a new study programme, including a programme description, to the department, if this is in line with faculty procedures. If the department recommends approval of the programme, it sends the proposal to the faculty.

The faculty

The faculty approves/denies the application according to its own guidelines. If the faculty recommends approval of the study programme, it sends an application to the Education Committee *no later than three weeks before their scheduled meeting*. The application must contain the faculty's assessments of the academic content and structure of the study programme and the current resource situation. Furthermore, it is recommended that each faculty has an administrative employee that is responsible for assisting the academic staff in the application process to assure that the development of the programme is in line with UiB's guidelines for approval of joint degrees. This person is the link between the Division of Student Affairs and the academic staff.

¹³ <http://www.uib.no/quality-in-studies/quality-system/the-quality-assurance-handbook>

The application to the Division of Student Affairs shall be forwarded through *Ephorte* and shall include:

- An assessment of the study programme's relevance, including also relevance for society at large. The application shall also show how the planned study programme is related to current research and artistic development.
- A reason for why the faculty wishes to establish the study programme.
- An assessment of the financial conditions and need for resources.
- An assessment of how the approval of the new programme can/will influence the size of the faculty's total portfolio of study programmes.
- A completed programme description according to the UiB template (the programme description can be written in English).
- The case document from the Faculty Committee and its decision.

The Division of Student Affairs

The Division of Student Affairs will write the item document to the Education Committee. The document will include a short description of the programme and its relevance related to UiB's strategy and Action Plan for Internationalisation, as well as UiB's administrative guidelines. An assessment of the budgetary consequences will also be included.

The Education Committee (UU)

The Education Committee will give an academic recommendation to the University Board regarding approval of the study programme. When establishing new joint degrees/joint study programmes, the consortium can function as the Programme Board.

If the Education Committee does not recommend the approval of a new programme, the faculty will receive a letter explaining the denial and possible suggestions for improvements.

The University Board (UST)

The University Board makes the final decision regarding approval and establishment of a joint degree/joint study programme.

3.4.2 PRE-APPROVAL AND SPECIAL PROCEDURES REGARDING ERASMUS MUNDUS II APPLICATIONS

In connection with the application process for Erasmus Mundus II (application deadline April 30 every year), a Letter of Intent from every partner institution of the consortium is required. This letter shall be signed by the institution's "legal representative"/rector, and is a confirmation of the institution's participation and responsibility in the cooperation. This Letter of Intent can also be seen as a pre-approval of the study programme and the collaboration, but requires that the study programme will be approved/established according to regular guidelines should the programme receive Erasmus Mundus support or should the consortium decide to run the programme regardless of EM support.

It is also important to stress the need for the Division of Student Affairs and the faculties to be informed of planned applications as early as possible. This in order to assist the academic staff in the application process, and so that the faculties can get an overview of potential joint degrees.

Procedures related to the Erasmus Mundus application:

- **Letter of Intent:** The faculty sends a request to the Division of Student Affairs no later than April 15. The request shall include:
 - Decision from the faculty to support the Erasmus Mundus application
 - Draft of the programme description (according to current template)
 - Draft of the Erasmus Mundus application
 - Draft of the Letter of Intent (the consortium will either have its own version or the Division of Academic Affairs can provide a template)
 The Division of Student Affairs will ask for the rector's signature and forward the Letter of Intent where the academic staff wants it to be sent.
- **Final Erasmus Mundus application:** A copy of the final application should be sent to the faculty and the Division of Student Affairs within one month after the application deadline. The Division of Student Affairs will archive it in Ephorte.
- **Establishing/approval of the programme:** If the consortium receives Erasmus Mundus support, the academic staff/department must immediately start the process of finalising the cooperation agreement and applying for approval (see guidelines above).

3.5 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT

Joint degree programmes are far more demanding in terms of resources than ordinary study programmes. The costs of both planning and running joint degree programmes are substantial. Costs depend on whether or not one acts as coordinator, how many partner institutions are involved and access to external financing. Financial and administrative consequences should be clarified as early as possible. The cost estimate should include both development and operating costs. Collaborating academic communities can apply for financial support for developing joint degree programmes through the following channels:

- LLP/Erasmus – Multilateral projects (Curriculum Development): is a sub-programme under the Erasmus programme. The programme requires an application to consist of at least three partners. Support can be given for up to three years (the last year for management of the programme). For further information: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/guide/fiches/erasmus9_en.html
- NORDPLUS Higher Education: gives financial support to different types of projects. In 2009 they prioritised 'Development of Joint Study Programmes. Curriculum Development Projects'. **The deadline for applications to the Nordplus Framework Programme was 1 March 2011.** The programme requires at least three partners from Nordic/Baltic countries and support can be given for up to three years. NOTE! All financing through Nordplus is based on 50% self-financing. For further information: <http://www.nordplonline.org/eng>
<http://www.siu.no/nor/Hoeyere-utdanning-og-forskning/Samarbeid-med-land-i-Europa/Nordplus-Hoeyere-utdanning> SIU can also be contacted directly.
- Nordic Master: The Nordic Council of Ministers has supported the development of joint Nordic Master's degrees since 2007 (limited upwards to DKK 1 million) The programme is administered by the *Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education* (SIU). For further information:
 - <http://www.norden.org/no/nordisk-ministerraad/ministerraad/nordisk-ministerraad-for-utdanning-og-forskning-mr-u/raadgivningsgrupper/raadgivningsgrupper-for-nordisk-samarbeid-innen-hoegre-utdanning-hoegut/nordic-master-program>
 - <http://www.siu.no/nor/Hoeyere-utdanning-og-forskning/Samarbeid-med-land-i-Europa/Nordic-Master-Programme>. SIU can also be contacted directly.

- Financial support for an Erasmus Mundus programme presupposes that the programme is 'fully developed at the time of the application and be ready to run for at least five consecutive editions as of the academic year following the application year'.¹⁴

3.6 CHECKLIST FOR THE DEVELOPMENT STAGE

- Draw up and sign a Memorandum of Understanding (if relevant)
- Ensure that the partner institutions are accredited
- Meet to discuss challenges
- If relevant, apply for financial development support
- Develop a study plan/programme description and discuss such elements as:
 - Scope of the degree, the independent work and the courses
 - Mobility
- Criteria for admission and admission procedures
- Registration with regard to admission (enrollment)
- Follow-up of the students
- Appeal procedures and grading system
- Diploma
- Information, marketing and recruitment
- Student arrival, housing and welfare
- Establishment/approval of the joint degree programme at all partner institutions
- Draw up and enter into a cooperation agreement

¹⁴ Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency: 'ERASMUS MUNDUS 2009 – 2013. Programme Guide', page 23, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/programme/programme_guide_en.php

4. MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION STAGE

As far as possible, the practical organisation of the programme must have been discussed and agreed on in the development stage. At the start of and during the course of studies, student administrative matters must be accommodated. This applies in particular to the online student administrative systems and other logistical matters. The partners should establish a system for continuous evaluation and improvement of student administration systems and the academic content of the study programme. Regular meetings, telephone conferences and similar should be organised for persons with academic and administrative responsibility during the operational phase. Regular meetings create a sense of security, fellowship and involvement and strengthen the bonds between colleagues across institutional and national boundaries.

EU has produced a handbook concerning the running of joint degrees based on "good practices" developed by six chosen Erasmus Mundus programmes, among them topped which UiB participates in: "The Handbook – Developing Excellent Erasmus Mundus Courses" (http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus-mundus/doc/handbook_en.pdf).

4.1 ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

- *UiB recommends that admission be carried out jointly by the partner institutions and with common criteria for admission. This underpins the idea of joint responsibility for the study programme. UiB also recommends that the partner institutions agree on appeal procedures.*
- It is often natural for the coordinating institution to be responsible for the practical aspects of admission, while decisions on who should be admitted are made jointly by the academic staff.
- If the coordinator is responsible for admission, the coordinator sends out a common letter of admission on behalf of the partner institutions when the applications have been processed. The coordinator also sends out a letter of refusal and information about waiting lists.
- If UiB is the coordinator for international joint degree collaborations, the person with administrative responsibility for the degree should contact the Division of Student Affairs/Section for Academic Administration to clarify how admissions can be carried out in the most expedient manner.
- If UiB is a partner in the international joint degree collaboration, the academic and administrative staff at the department that is responsible for admissions. The department is welcome to contact the Division of Student Affairs/Section for Academic Administration if there are any questions regarding admission procedures.
- As regards registration of admission in connection with the admission of students to the joint degree programme, it is UHR's view that, when a joint diploma is to be issued, all students, regardless of whether they have been physically present at all the educational institutions, are registered with admission rights at all the institutions. If each institution issues a separate diploma, it is UHR's view that it is sufficient that students who are actually staying at an educational institution are granted admission there.¹⁵
- In both cases, the students should have been admitted for the whole study period even if the student only stays at the educational institution for a certain period. In

¹⁵ UHR's working group: 'Report: Joint degree collaboration and cotutelle, 30 June 2007', p. 21 - http://www.uhr.no/documents/Rapport_om_fellesgrader_og_cotutelle.pdf

other words, it must be ensured that the students do not lose their admission rights when they are staying at another educational institution. The idea is that a joint degree means that all the institutions are responsible for the students, and that all the students are degree students at the individual educational institutions.

4.2 ARRIVAL/INTRODUCTION AND HOUSING (INTERNATIONAL JOINT DEGREES)

- It may be necessary to give the students who are coming to UiB for a period of study an information letter together with other relevant information, such as the brochures 'Your Guide' and 'Semester Start'.
- As regards international joint degrees, it is important to have close contact with UDI, so that the application process for non-European students runs as smoothly as possible. UDI can make exceptions from the rule that students must apply from their home country if the student is admitted to a joint degree programme and has already arrived in Europe to study. Please contact the Division of Student Affairs/ Section for Academic Administration.
- If the students arrive at a time that makes it possible for them to participate in the 'Introductory programme for new international students', they are strongly advised to participate. The students will receive a personal welcome information envelope during the Introductory Programme.
- If the students arrive at another time, it is the department that is responsible for giving the newly arrived students sufficient information and introduction.
- The department should also have a programme for students admitted to joint degrees in order to integrate them with other students and/or help to unite them as a group.
- If the study programme is obligated to offer international students housing, it is the responsibility of the department to inform the students of current procedures. The students have to apply for housing at the Student Welfare Organisation (SiB), within the deadlines set by SiB. Students are guaranteed accommodation if they apply within the application deadlines, using a UiB reservation code (will be provided by Division of Student Affairs) and pay rent from 1. August (autumn semester) or 1 January (spring semester). The students will automatically receive a contract for housing for one year, but can cancel the contract by giving two months' notice.

4.3 DIPLOMA AND DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT

If the procedures, design and content of the Diploma have not been clarified already, the partners should try to clarify most matters relating to the issuing of diplomas during the start-up phase. Regardless of the type of diploma that is issued by the partners, it must be stated on the Diploma and the Diploma Supplement that the degree is a joint degree.¹⁶ If the collaborating institutions choose to issue one diploma from each institution (double/multiple diplomas), the diplomas should include wording stating that the diplomas have been issued for the same joint degree and are only valid if presented together.

¹⁶ Cf. Comments on the individual sections, Chapter 4. Joint degrees, Comments on section 4-1 in the *Regulations relating to quality assurance and quality enhancement in higher education and tertiary vocational education of February 1 2010*, which states that 'It shall be stated on the Diploma and the Diploma Supplement if the education (degree, vocational studies) has been provided in cooperation with other institutions, cf. the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges section 3-11 fourth paragraph.'

The parties must agree on the contents of the Diploma, but the minimum information should include the student's name on the front page of the Diploma (as written in his/her passport), the student's date of birth, the name of the issuing institution(s) and the degree that the student has been awarded. The contents and format of the Diploma and the Diploma Supplement should be clarified at least one semester before the first intake of students is expected to complete the degree.

UHR's working group for joint degree collaboration and cotutelle proposes the following arrangement in cases where one joint diploma will be issued as documentation of a joint degree.

- A diploma cover will be designed, with logos from all the institutions in the consortium. The logos can be produced in advance, or they can be printed from the student administration computer systems.
- The relevant bodies at the consortium coordinator sign the Diploma.
- A description of the collaboration, course descriptions and expected qualifications and learning outcome shall be included on the Diploma's inside cover.
- Instead of one joint basis document, each of the partner institutions shall issue their own insertions that form part of the basis for the Diploma. These are transcripts of grades that have been awarded at the institution, including the institution's seal/stamp and signatures.
- Each institution will also issue one Diploma Supplement each. A description of the individual countries' education systems must also be included in the DS, section 8
- The insertions should be sent to the consortium coordinator by registered post in a sealed envelope.
- The current student administration computer systems must be adapted to enable the production of diplomas in accordance with this proposal.¹⁷

4.4 INFORMATION AND MARKETING

- In connection with recruitment to joint degree programmes, the added value of this type of collaborative project should be clarified for potential applicants. Information about learning outcomes and *employability* that can be expected to strengthen candidates' position on the job market after completion of the programme should be emphasised. It will also be an advantage to highlight any collaboration with the business community and public bodies in connection with recruitment.
- It will be an advantage if the partners agree on who is responsible for answering questions from potential applicants.
- Appropriate information in Norwegian and English to potential students must be made available and kept up-to-date on UiB's external web and recruitment portals. Contact the Division of Academic Affairs for further information.

4.5 QUALITY ASSURANCE

The following points are important to discuss when working to assure the quality of the study programme. Keywords are predictability and transparency. All involved parties should also be familiar with the ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) standards for quality assurance in higher education (<http://www.enqa.eu/>). It is an advantage if the partner institutions adopt a plan for a quality assurance system before the programme starts.

¹⁷ UHR's working group: 'Report: Joint degree collaboration and cotutelle, 30 June 2007', p. 22, http://www.uhr.no/documents/Rapport_om_fellesgrader_og_cotutelle.pdf (unofficial translation)

- The partners should prepare their own (proposals for) course descriptions for the courses for which they are responsible. UiB must assure the quality of the part that is included in the joint degree in the same way as for ordinary courses in accordance with relevant quality assurance requirements.
- Courses should be approved/recognised by all the partners according to a system decided by the partners.
- Quality assurance procedures for all joint processes (such as admission, diploma design) should be decided jointly.
- Each institution should be familiar with the other institutions' procedures for quality assurance of local processes.
- The study programme must be coherent. A system and procedures for regular evaluation of the programme as a whole and its constituent elements must be prepared jointly.
- The programme should be assessed both halfway through and on completion. It is important to get both the students' and teaching staff's views on the programme at an early stage, so that it is possible to make adjustments if necessary. Both the academic content and the administrative implementation of the programme must be evaluated.
- Who 'cancels' the joint degree if the evaluations uncover serious problems relating to the programme or the collaboration?
- The collaborating institutions should establish a governing body that is in charge of the development and quality assurance of the study programme. The institutions can choose the organisation model they themselves find most suitable. This means that the supreme body of the study programme can be a programme board, a steering committee or another type of arrangement. The body should consist of at least one representative from each collaborating institution. The form and mandate of the governing body should be clearly described in the agreement entered into by the parties.
- If the governing body is to have decision-making powers (decide changes in the programme plan, finally decide admissions etc.), the body must, according to the *Act relating to Universities and University Colleges (2005)*, have at least 20 per cent student representation:

Section 4-4. *Student representation on the bodies of the institution*

(1) Students must constitute at least 20 per cent of the members of all collegial bodies that are given decision-making authority. If this only amounts to one member, one additional student will be entitled to attend meetings, with the right to speak and to submit proposals.

(2) The provision in the first paragraph may be set aside if the delegating body unanimously decides otherwise.

PROCEDURES:

For each joint degree programme that is established, UiB must identify at least an academic and administrative staff member responsible for the programme in the department to which the programme naturally belongs. The Division of Student Affairs must be informed about this.

4.6 EVALUATION AND REPORTING

- Internal reports (Report on Educational Attainments/Utdanningsmelding): the faculties and departments should refer to joint degrees and joint study programmes in their reports. The member of the academic staff responsible for the joint degree should write a programme report as a basis for the faculties and departments.

- The partner institutions should also have a system for evaluation and reporting. Such a system could generate an annual report from each partner institution in addition to a joint annual report prepared by the coordinating institution.
- The partner institutions should have a plan for quality assurance adopted before implementation of the programme.

4.7 REVISION OF THE AGREEMENT

Well before the agreement expires, it should be evaluated with regard to continuation or discontinuation. Termination of the agreement means termination of the study programme. In that case, UiB's procedures for termination/discontinuation of study programmes must be followed (see *Handbook for quality assurance of university programmes of study*, <http://www.uib.no/quality-in-studies/quality-system/the-quality-assurance-handbook>). In the case of continuation or renewal of the agreement, the same procedures are followed as when drawing one up initially. The department should contact the Division of Student Affairs six to twelve months before the agreement expires.

4.8 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION/OPERATION

Joint degree programmes are more demanding in terms of resources than ordinary study programmes. The costs relating to joint degree programmes are considerable in connection with the planning and running of the programme. The costs depend on whether or not the institution is a coordinator, the number of partners and access to external funding. *Operating expenses relating to a joint degree programme are expected to be covered by the faculty/department's operating budget, alternatively by the consortium's operating funds (not tuition fees) or other external funding sources.* It is therefore important that the financial consequences and the need for administrative resources are clarified as early as possible. *UiB may not receive tuition fees from students. Nor can UiB accept such support indirectly through the collaborating institutions.*¹⁸

It is possible to apply for operational funding from the following programmes:

- **Erasmus Mundus II:** grants operational funding to the collaborating institutions, and scholarships to European students and third-country students. Financial support for an Erasmus Mundus programme presupposes that the programme has already been developed and can be started shortly.¹⁹ **The next deadline for applications is approx. 30 April 2010.** For further information, see: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/index_en.html.
- **Erasmus Intensive Programme:** provides support for short study programmes (at least ten days + any preparations/ follow-up) that bring together students and teachers from higher education institutions. Can also be relevant as funding for activities that form part of the joint degree collaboration. If the application is coordinated from Norway, the application must be submitted to and processed by SIU. For further information, see: <http://siu.no/nor/Hoeyere-utdanning-og-forskning/Erasmus/Intensivprogram>.

¹⁸ In a letter to NTNU dated 30 July 2007, the Ministry of Education and Research (in reply to an enquiry from NTNU) states that 'fees cannot be collected from individual students, neither directly nor indirectly, when the student in question is taking part in a study programme leading to a degree or professional training qualifications.'

¹⁹ Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency: 'ERASMUS MUNDUS 2009-2013. Programme Guide', page 23 - http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/programme/programme_guide_en.php

- Nordplus: provides support for student mobility, teacher mobility, intensive courses and network support. NOTE! All Nordplus funding must have a 50 per cent self-financing element, except mobility. For further information, see: http://www.nordplusonline.org/eng/higher_education
- SIU programmes: SIU administers various programmes that may be relevant to certain programmes, such as NOMA, NUFU and cooperation with Russia. For further information, see: <http://siu.no/nor/Hoeyere-utdanning-og-forskning>

4.9 CHECKLIST FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION STAGE

- Admission and enrolment
- Arrival and housing
- Diploma and Diploma Supplement
- Information and marketing
- Quality assurance
- Evaluation and reporting
- Revision of the cooperation agreement
- If relevant, apply for financial support

5. TERMINATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

There may be several reasons why a joint degree is terminated or why UiB withdraws from such a collaboration. A well-functioning quality assurance system will uncover problems and enable continuous improvement, and thereby prevent termination. Theoretically, such a system may also uncover problems that are so serious that termination must be considered. In such cases, the partners should discuss the problems and find solutions that are acceptable to all the partners.

There may also be other reasons why terminating the program or UiB's withdrawal has to be considered. They could, for example, be insufficient recruitment, deficient finances or unforeseen national circumstances. Termination of joint degrees shall follow the same procedures as for termination of ordinary study programmes at UiB (see *Handbook for quality assurance of university programmes of study*, <http://www.uib.no/quality-in-studies/quality-system/the-quality-assurance-handbook>).

Irrespective of the cause(s), efforts should be made to ensure that termination or withdrawal takes place in a predictable and orderly manner. The students already admitted to the programme are the first priority. This is in accordance with the *Regulations relating to quality assurance and quality enhancement in higher education and tertiary vocational education of February 1 2010*, which, among other things, state:

Section 4-2. Requirements for joint degrees – the responsibilities of the institutions

(4) If a joint degree collaboration is terminated, the institution shall enter into an agreement with another institution that can be academically responsible for enabling the students to complete the study programme and sit exams, or implement other measures that enable students to complete the study programme. Such measures must be approved by NOKUT if NOKUT has accredited the relevant study programme at the institution, cf. section 4-1 second paragraph.

PROCEDURES:

- In the agreement between the partners, each institution's responsibilities with regard to withdrawal should be clarified, including how far in advance one must notify (in writing) the partners about a decision to withdraw.
- The agreement should also clarify what responsibilities each institution has towards the students admitted to the programme if it chooses to withdraw from the programme.

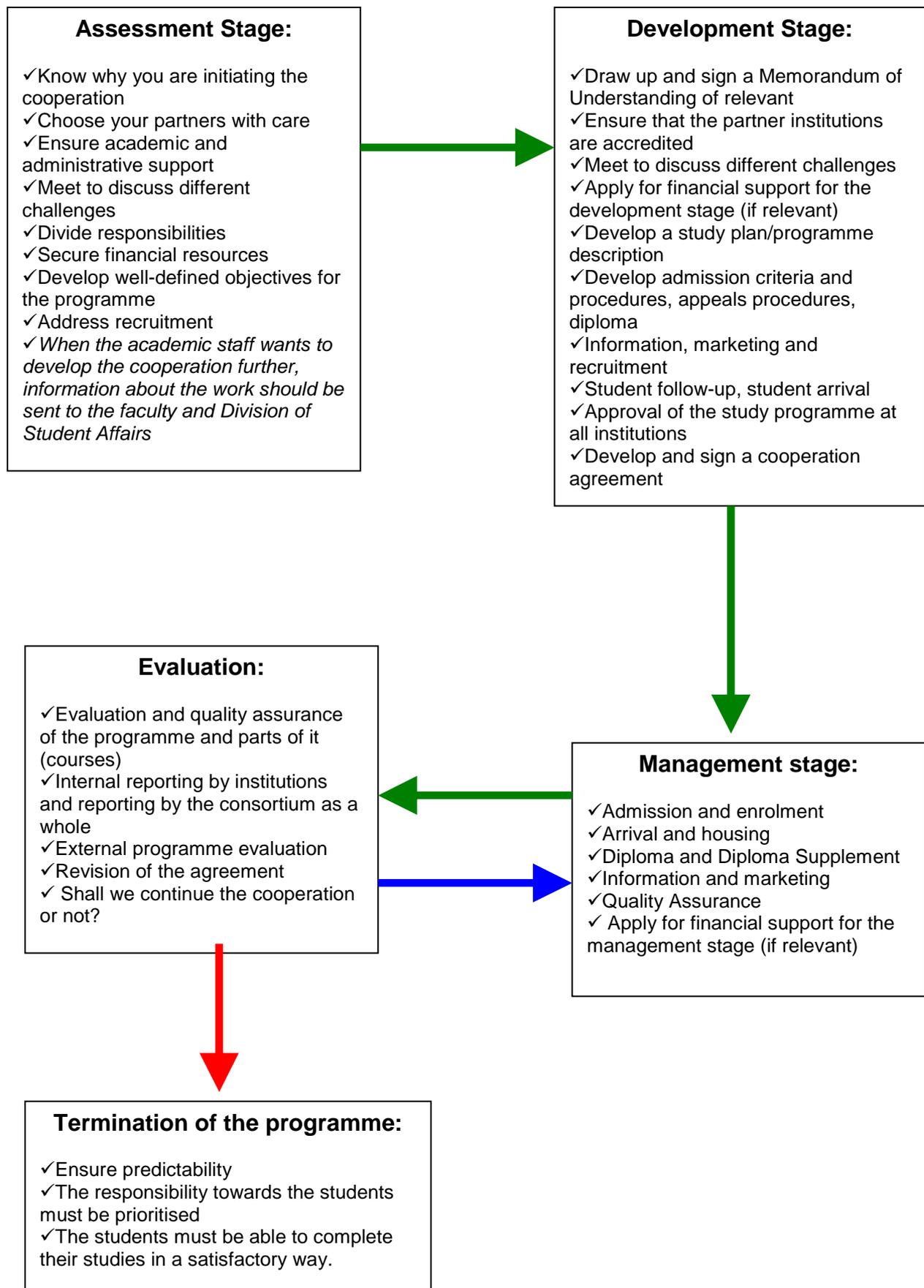
Proposals for the agreement text:

Any cooperating university may withdraw from this agreement, giving six months' written notice to the other institutions. However, students who have commenced their studies at any of the cooperating universities on the date of termination are entitled to complete their courses of study and the programme at all institutions.

If all the cooperating institutions agree to terminate the joint study programme, all the cooperating institutions have to make arrangements for all students who have commenced their studies to complete their courses of study and the programme in a satisfactory manner.²⁰

²⁰ The text is from UiB's agreement template for joint degrees.

Figure 2. Stages of development and management of joint degrees and joint study programmes



6. UiB'S PROCEDURES FOR COLLABORATION ON JOINT DEGREES

- The department sends information to the faculty with a copy to the Division of Student Affairs as soon as it sees the cooperation as relevant and wishes to proceed with the project.
- The faculty reports back to the department on whether or not it supports the development and sends a copy to the Division of Student Affairs. The faculty should have guidelines and procedures for how to handle such requests. A positive response is a go-ahead for further development of the collaboration.
- For every joint study programme established at UiB, one person with academic responsibility and one person with administrative responsibility shall be appointed in the department the programme naturally falls under. The Division of Student Affairs shall be informed about who is appointed.
- In the agreement between the partners, each institution's responsibilities in connection with withdrawal should be clarified, including how far in advance it must notify (in writing) the partners about its decision to withdraw.
- The agreement should also clarify what responsibilities each institution has towards the students already admitted to the study programme if it chooses to withdraw from the programme.

Appendix 1. Excerpt from the *Regulations relating to quality assurance and quality enhancement in higher education and tertiary vocational education of February 1 2010*²¹

Chapter 4. Joint degrees

Section 4-1. *The institutions' right to award degrees and professional training qualifications in cooperation with other institutions*

(1) Universities and university colleges can award degrees and professional training qualifications in cooperation with other Norwegian or foreign institutions (joint degrees).

(2) For study programmes that are to be included in the basis for a joint degree and that the individual institutions do not have the authority to establish themselves, the accreditation provisions pursuant to these regulations section 3-1 apply insofar as they are relevant. In such cases, NOKUT can also accredit part of a study programme. Joint degree cooperation between Norwegian institutions presupposes that the institutions in total meet the standards and criteria for accreditation on studies as set by NOKUT.

Section 4-2. *Requirements for joint degrees – the responsibilities of the institutions*

(1) Universities and university colleges that award joint degrees must enter into agreements with collaborating institutions, regulating the division of responsibility between the parties, including the awarding of degrees and the design of diplomas.

(2) The institution must ensure that the collaborating institutions are accredited or officially approved for the provision of higher education in accordance with applicable systems in the country in question, and that the relevant courses are accredited as higher education at the level of the joint degree.

(3) Students who are admitted to study programmes that will form the basis for a joint degree between Norwegian and foreign institutions, must be ensured periods of study of a certain scope at the collaborating institutions.

(4) If the joint degree collaboration is terminated, the institution shall enter into an agreement with another institution that can be academically responsible for enabling the students to complete the study programme and sit exams, or implement other measures that enable students to complete the study programme. Such measures must be approved by NOKUT if NOKUT has accredited the relevant study programme at the institution, cf. section 4-1 second paragraph.

(5) Universities and university colleges must report to NOKUT which joint degrees the institution awards.

Section 4-3. *Supplementary provisions*

NOKUT can issue regulations containing supplementary provisions for joint degrees.

²¹ Unofficial translations by the Division of Student Affairs, UiB. Original Norwegian version: http://www.lovdato.no/cgi-wift/wiftldles?doc=/usr/www/lovdato/for/sf/kd/kd-20100201-0096.html&emne=forskrift%20om%20kvalitetssikring%20og%20kvalitetsutvikling*&

Comments on the individual sections²²

Chapter 4. Joint degrees

Comments on section 4-1. The institutions' right to award degrees and professional training qualifications in cooperation with other institutions

This provision is a continuation of previous regulation concerning accreditation according to the *Act relating to Universities and University Colleges*, section 4-1.

Norway has, through its endorsement of the Bologna process, obligated itself to remove legal obstacles to institutions of higher education that wish to offer degrees in collaboration with other institutions, so-called joint degrees. This has been taken into account in the *Act relating to Universities and University Colleges* section 3-2 first paragraph: 'The Ministry may issue regulations [...] concerning the institutions' right to award degrees and professional training qualifications in cooperation with other institutions.'

It shall be indicated on the diploma and the Diploma Supplement if the education (degrees, professional training) has been provided in cooperation with other institutions, cf. the *Act relating to Universities and University Colleges* section 3-11 fourth paragraph.

First paragraph states that universities and university colleges can award joint degrees in cooperation with other institutions in Norway or abroad.

The second paragraph states that the institutions' authority to establish study programmes themselves (programmes, courses) that will form part of the basis for joint degrees will be the same as for studies that are to form part of a degree or professional training that the institution offers on its own, cf. these regulations section 3-1.

In cases where the institution must apply to NOKUT for accreditation of study programmes, NOKUT is authorised to accredit parts of a study programme (modules, courses).

This provision was changed in the regulations of March 15, 2011. It is stated that institutions that are developing a national joint degree, collectively must meet the NOKUT standards and criteria for accreditation of study programmes. This means that the collaborating institutions can establish a joint academic group which will meet the accreditation standards and which has the collective responsibility for the programme.

²² Unofficial translations by the Division of Student Affairs, UiB. Original Norwegian version: <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/kd/dok/rundskriv/2011/rundskriv-f-08-10-oppdateret-15032011.html?id=635917>

Comments on section 4-2. Requirements for joint degrees – the responsibilities of the institutions

This provision is a continuation of previous regulation concerning accreditation according to the *Act relating to Universities and University Colleges*, section 4-2.

To avoid disagreements about responsibilities relating to joint degrees, a provision has been included stating that universities and university colleges that participate in such collaborations must enter into agreements about this with the collaborating institution(s).

When universities and university colleges take part in joint degree collaborations, they also accept responsibility for providing students with a programme that is quality-assured as a whole. The collaborating institutions must, according to the ensure that all parts of a joint degree are accredited, i.e. that all the courses in the study programme, including the Master's thesis, are offered by an institution that is accredited at the relevant level or by an institution that is officially approved as a higher educational institution in the country in question. The institution must be entitled to offer the courses, or a separate accreditation must exist for the part that is not offered by an institution that is accredited at the relevant level. At least one of the institutions must be entitled to award the relevant degree (Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, PhD). When an individual course has been accredited, this course can also be used in other programmes where its inclusion is academically relevant.

In the Berlin Communiqué 'Realising the European Higher Education Area' of 19 September 2003, the necessity of ensuring a substantial period of study abroad in joint degree programmes is emphasised (' ... they [Ministers] stress the necessity of ensuring a substantial period of study abroad in joint degree programmes ... '). It is not deemed relevant to issue more detailed rules for the scope of periods of study at collaborating institutions, as the understanding of 'substantial' will vary with the type of degree studies (subject area, level) and country. It is now specified in the provision that ensuring a substantial period of study at each of the collaborating institutions is applicable for collaboration between Norwegian institutions as well as collaboration between Norwegian and international institutions.

The provision's fourth paragraph is intended to ensure that students who are admitted to a joint degree study programme at a Norwegian institution get the education they have been promised, or a corresponding education. Corresponding provisions also apply to the institution's own study programmes; cf. these regulations section 3-4 third paragraph.

Pursuant to the Lisbon Convention of 9 June 2004 (Recommendation on the recognition of joint degrees), national accreditation bodies should have an overview of joint degrees in which the universities and university colleges participate. The provision's fifth paragraph instructs NOKUT to maintain an overview of joint degrees which can be awarded by Norwegian institutions. This applies to joint degrees that include study programmes that must be accredited by NOKUT, as well as joint degrees that include study programmes that the institutions themselves are authorised to establish.

Appendix 2. Excerpt from Regulations relating to controlling educational quality in higher education of February 28, 2013²³

§ 7-4 Supplementary provisions for accreditation of parts of a study programme which is part of a joint degree.

1. It shall be clearly stated which parts of the study program the different collaborating institutions are responsible for.
2. Suitable routines for development and quality assurance of the study programme as a whole shall be documented.
3. The parts which the study programme consists of shall constitute a collective whole, especially concerning the study programme's level and learning outcome.
4. The parts which are offered by institutions subject to the Act 1 April 2005 No. 15, relating to universities and university colleges, shall fulfil the standards and criteria for accreditation of study programmes § 7-1 to § 7-3.

²³ Unofficial translations by the Division of Student Affairs, UiB. Original Norwegian version: <http://www.lovdatab.no/cgi-wift/ldles?doc=/sf/sf/sf-20130228-0237.html>