



UNIC Online Event: Implementing Double and Joint Degrees

10th of March 2025,
3-5 pm (CET)

Susanne Lippold and
Randolph Galla,
Ruhr University Bochum



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Agenda

- ✓ Welcome
- ✓ What is UNIC?
- ✓ Learning & Teaching in UNIC
- ✓ Overview Varieties of Joint Programmes
- ✓ Overview Mobility Schemes
- ✓ Tipps, Tricks and Lessons Learned

What is UNIC?

UNIC is the **European University of Cities in Post-Industrial Transition.**

We are an alliance of **ten universities** in post-industrial cities. We aim to **boost mobility** and **foster integration and diversity**, to achieve societal change.

We work together to create inclusive societies through **teaching, research and social engagement.**



UNIC Initiatives



“One-stop-shop” for universities
to engage with cities +
communities for transformative
innovation

<https://www.unic.eu/fr/city-futures>



State-of-the-art **Blended
Intensive Programs, virtual and
physical mobility, and joint
degrees**

<https://campus.unic.eu/>



Innovating in **intercultural
teaching, challenge-based
learning, and sustainability
education**

<https://www.unic.eu/fr/centre-teaching-and-learning>

7 UNIC Thematic Lines



TL1: Superdiversity



**TL4: Justice, security
and institutions**



**TL7: Arts, Culture
and Creativity**



**TL2: Sustainability and
green cities**



**TL5: Entrepreneurial
learning for innovation**



**TL3: Urban resilience
and smart cities**



**TL6: Health and
wellbeing**

Learning & Teaching in UNIC

UNIC's educational offers

- **Virtual Exchange:** is a form of virtual mobility characterised by particularly intensive interaction between teachers and students of at least two UNIC partners
<https://unic.eu/de/unic-virtual-exchange-handbook>
- **Open Online Courses (OOC):** Online courses provided by all Partners for all UNIC students
<https://campus.unic.eu/public/courses>
- **Open Online Language Modules (OLM):**
<https://www.unic.eu/fr/online-language-modules>
- **Joint Degree Programmes:** SEOS and RePIC
<https://www.unic.eu/fr/repic#all>
<https://www.unic.eu/fr/seos#all>
- **Double Degree Programmes**
- **CityLabs/Hackathons:** working together on urban challenges (formats: courses or events)

Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Redesigning the Post-Industrial City

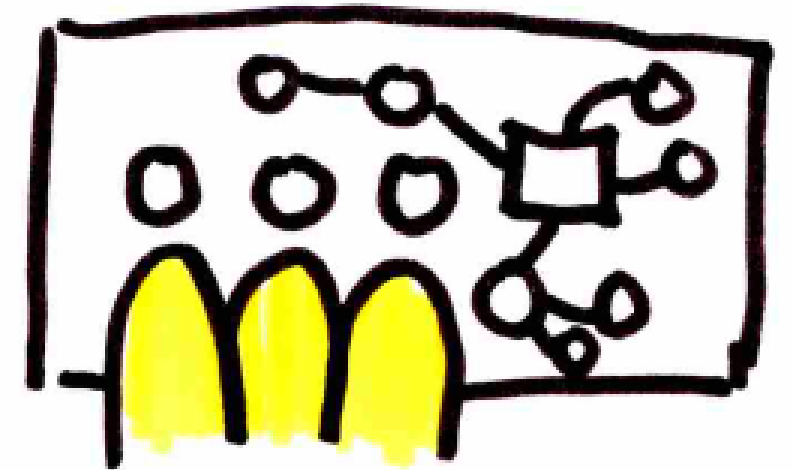


Joint Master Superdiversity in Education, Organisations and Society



Two Joint8 in UNIC: Challenges

- ? Lack of knowledge in the legal and organisational frameworks at the partners
- ? 8 different higher education laws with different degrees of flexibility
- ? Different financing models for degree programmes
- ? Different university cultures in organisational matters
- ? Different discussion cultures and approaches to the development of degree programmes
- ? Different levels of knowledge and previous experience
- ? Agreement on every detail of the curriculum necessary
- ? New joint procedures and regulations necessary



Toolbox for Joint/Double Degrees in UNIC

- ✓ Template partnership agreement for a Joint Degree
- ✓ Template partnership agreement for a Double Degree Option
- ✓ Draft examination regulations
- ✓ Overview varieties of Joint Programmes
- ✓ Template joint QA in a degree programme
- ✓ Template governance of o joint programme
- ✓ Mobility Scheme Varieties
- ✓ Wiki (in progress) on relevant legal and administrative information related to the development and implementation of joint educational offers and their QA of all partners + agreed solutions for legal/administrative challenges
- ✓ Experiences in Accreditation by the European Approach

For Questions & Good Practices



<https://www.taskcards.de/#/board/0b334ec2-8ec2-46fa-98af-962ca4d5ccc4?token=17f69ff9-eb4e-4f10-b5d3-8207781c1e74>

Varieties of Joint Programmes – Definitions used in UNIC

Double (Dual) Degree Option

Double (Dual) / Multiple Degree

Joint Degree

Double Degree Option: Main Features

- ✓ Two **independent degree programmes** of two different universities, with their own comprehensive curricula, examination, and study regulations are linked via cooperation agreements
- ✓ Students study in a **special track of the main programme** at their home university and move at least for a semester to the partner university.
- ✓ **Students choose** at a certain point in time whether to obtain a double degree or just the single degree from their home institution
- ✓ Mutually agreed equivalence lists show which achievements of the partner universities are **recognised** by the other side and by what procedures
- ✓ Usually, no joint cohort
- ✓ Usually, one stay of at least **one semester abroad**, no repeated switching back and forth between the partner universities
- ✓ **Both** partners award their **degree**

Double Degree Option: Organisational & Structural Parameters

- ✓ **Enrolment** at the home university
- ✓ Requirements for **admission** depending on the independent degree programme of the home university plus agreed additional criteria for participating in the double degree option
- ✓ **Local exam** regulations
- ✓ **Local QA**
- ✓ **Day-to-day** programme **management** by the local structures and a **local contact person** for the double degree option at each university
- ✓ **One thesis**, written at the home university, usually with aligned ECTS

Double / Multiple Degrees: Main Features

- ✓ **Alignment** of two (or more) degree programmes at different universities
- ✓ Students **have no choice**: they study from day 1 in a double / multiple degree
- ✓ **Curriculum** of one institution is usually **supplemented** by offers of the other institution. Only together the offers constitute a complete curriculum.
- ✓ Joint cohort at at least for some time (e.g., one semester) recommended
- ✓ Repeated switching back and forth between the partner universities is possible
- ✓ **Local examination** regulations remain largely in force
- ✓ **Both** / all partners award their **degree**

Double / Multiple Degrees: Organisational & Structural Parameters

- ✓ **Enrolment** at home and host university depending on the procedure and criteria of the home university and the agreed additional criteria
- ✓ Joint **admission** procedure is strongly recommended
- ✓ Participating partners **deliver** the courses/modules and the degrees.
- ✓ **Local Examination** rules will be applied but an **agreement** e.g., requirement for the mobility, when a student finally fails etc. is necessary
- ✓ **Local QA** in place plus exchange of evaluation data
- ✓ Joint QA commission recommended
- ✓ **Day-to-day** programme **management** by the local structures
- ✓ Local coordinators strongly recommended
- ✓ **One thesis**, written at one of the partners but similar number of ECTS
- ✓ Usually new **accreditation/validation** needed

Joint Degrees: Main Features

- ✓ **New study programme**, with largely new courses/modules
- ✓ Aimed at awarding a **joint degree** from the outset
- ✓ Courses are delivered from all partners => only **together** the educational offers constitute a complete curriculum.
- ✓ Largely **joint cohort**
- ✓ Repeated switching back and forth between the partner universities is possible.
- ✓ **Joint examination regulations**
- ✓ Joint Degree = one diploma

Joint Degrees: : Organisational & Structural Parameters

- ✓ **Enrolment** in coordinating university and host university/universities
- ✓ One agreed **admission** procedure and joint admission criteria
- ✓ Agreement on specific details of the **curriculum**, e.g. size of modules, number of compulsory courses and electives, specialisation tracks, etc.
- ✓ Possibility of **core** partners (degree awarding) and **associate** partners (less involvement, not degree awarding)
- ✓ **Joint examination** regulations with joint rules necessary for, e.g., number of retakes/resits of exams, final failure, grading system, etc.
- ✓ **Joint QA**: some joint QA procedures/tools plus use of local evaluation instruments and data
- ✓ **Overall coordination** and management by one partner
- ✓ **Day-to-day** programme **management** by the joint coordinator assisted by local coordinators
- ✓ **One thesis**, same number of ECTS, joint supervision and joint defence
- ✓ **New Accreditation/Validation** of the joint degree needed

Comparison of the three Varieties

Double Degree Option

- ✓ Usually quicker and easier to implement
- ✓ Only for a part of the enrolled cohorts
- ✓ Good to try out the cooperation
- ✓ Utilisation of existing courses and structures

Double/Multiple Degree

- ✓ Stronger form of alignment
- ✓ Takes more time to implement
- ✓ Applies to all enrolled students
- ✓ Is good if many local specifics should not be changed
- ✓ Use of existing courses and structures possible

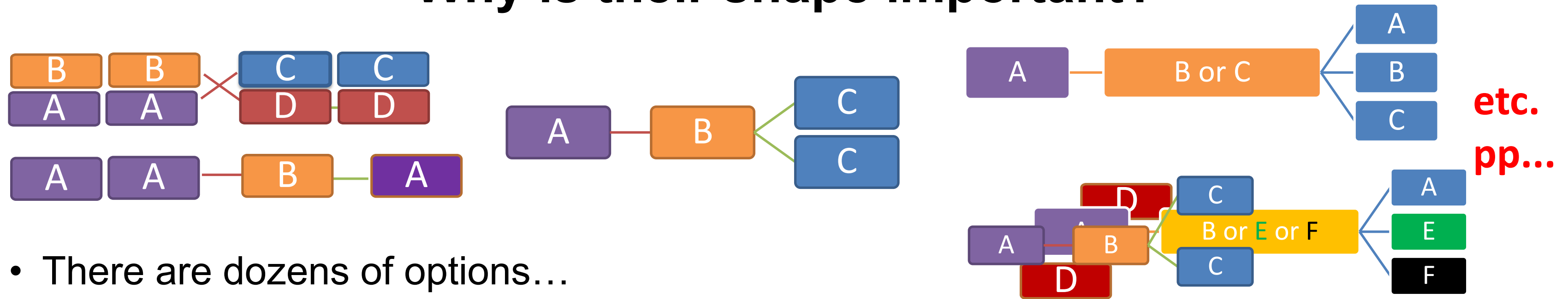
Joint Degree

- ✓ Strongest level of cooperation
- ✓ Time consuming in the implementation process
- ✓ Applies to all enrolled students
- ✓ New joint procedures and regulations necessary

Mobility Schemes for Double or Joint Degree Programmes

Mobility Schemes for Double or Joint Degree Programmes

Why is their shape important?



- There are dozens of options...
- But this is what a student looks at first (besides programme costs)
- You have certain goals, your partners as well, and we all have our own needs, possibilities, challenges, internal rules and traditions, obstacles...
- The chosen form therefore will probably be a compromise, and this is ok
- Focus on “Feasibility” – what do the legal frameworks and the partnership allow?
- Focus on “Studiability” – what’s best for the students in terms of time and content?
- Important: Involve all relevant stakeholders (students, Deanship, administration...)

Mobility Schemes for Double or Joint Degree Programmes

What is the main purpose?

Students to gain intercultural experience and to strengthen their knowledge of the language of the host country

>> 1-2 semesters at one partner university, content less in focus (replace own teaching with input of the same quality / level provided by the host uni)

Create a new programme and make complementary content available (curricular added value)

>> integration of content that cannot be offered at all or at the same level, higher demand on the coordination and integration of content in an aligned joint curriculum

Facility sharing – supplement one's own curriculum by equipment from partners

>> saves money/investments, but close coordination required, possibly integration of practical phases (?)

International dimension, 'global learning' with partners from outside the Bologna area

>> greater need for coordination on structural and recognition issues, more diversity, more differences in HE regulations

Mobility within a consortium - more than one 'station abroad'

>> complex arrangement of content, duration and chronological sequence of stays abroad

Programme with teacher mobility/flying faculty

>> to what extent? Small add-on here and there, or many staff and entire semesters? Short courses or a 'guest lectureship'? How much physical, how much virtual? Additional funding needed

Mobility Schemes – what should be considered?

- Agree early on a joint understanding of partners on what mobility can and what it cannot achieve.
- Some important questions:
 - What is helpful for the students? (lecture times, accommodation, costs, practical outreach, “known” language, educational styles...)
 - What does your legal framework allow? (Is there flexibility? Can you challenge ‘the usual routine’?)
 - What serves the needs of your academic colleagues, the lecturers in the programme ? (e.g. availability, meetings with colleagues where other topics - research- can be discussed, “charm of a beautiful place”, staff mobility phase connected to well-known conference...)
 - Which resources do you and your partners have? (e.g. for staff mobility)
 - Shall funding be obtained from third-party donors? What constraints are associated with this?

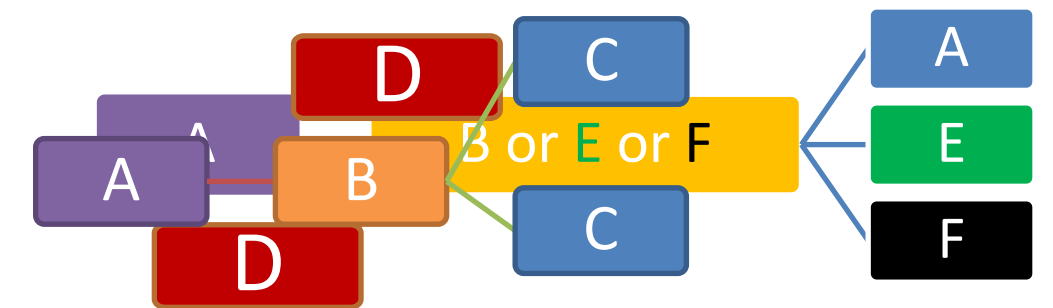
Mobility Schemes – which one is best?

There is no optimal scheme. Not every demand can be satisfied.

- Especially when there are many partners, the chosen path often leads to very complex structures.
- However, this usually comes at the expense of clarity and student-friendliness. (Your administration would not like it, either ;-)
- Management effort for complex schemes can be enormous and, if unavoidable, must be included into project development with sufficient human and financial resources - you don't do that on the side.

Therefore, better **keep it simple**:

- Easy-to-understand mobility structures are advantageous for
 - students
 - programme implementation
 - administration
 - Marketing (Applicants! Donors!)



Mobility Schemes in Multi-Partner Consortia

Example RePIC

Frame of programme development: UNIC and ERASMUS MUNDUS

- Substantial inclusion of all 8 partners (each at least 30 ECTS of teaching, all joint degree awarding)
- 60 students per cohort, all must physically study for at least one semester at two different universities that are not in their home country
- Erasmus Mundus as a goal (funds for scholarship and management): high degree of integration mandatory, visible jointness essential, tough competition

General expectations: Added value beyond simple Erasmus exchange or DD option, e.g.

- recruitment of students („new“, not „own“)
- Money for higher quality and better services/administration
- innovative content from / attractive facilities at the partner universities
- funding opportunities, increased visibility / reputation
- strengthening cooperation with partner institution...

Mobility Scheme of Joint Master Degree Programme REDESIGNING the POST-INDUSTRIAL CITY (RePIC)



Modules

Study Location

1st semester Fundamentals	2nd semester Specialisations	3rd semester In-Depth Studies	4th semester Master Thesis
City Lab I Urban Analysis, Digital Design Strategies & Design Visualisations (offered in Cork by UCC) <i>10 ECTS</i>	Track 1 Urban Transformations and Resilience <i>Cork & Liège 30 ECTS</i>	City Lab II (Field Salon) organised by UCC and run jointly with RePIC Partners, at alternating locations in Europe <i>10 ECTS</i>	Master Thesis (incl. Research Lab Work and Online Colloquium) 3 Options: - Monography, - Research Manuscript, - Practical Project Joint Supervision of two RePIC Universities <i>30 ECTS</i>
RePIC Core Theory The Post-Industrial City - Society, Space and Environment <i>10 ECTS</i>	Track 2 Inequality, Diversity and Social Justice <i>Rotterdam & Koc 30 ECTS</i>	Either: Structured Learning (in Liège) - Urban Mobility - Urban Ecology - Urban Economics <i>15 ECTS</i>	
RePIC Urban Transformations Research Forum <i>5 ECTS</i>	Track 3 Urban Analysis: Smart, Sustainable and Resilient Cities <i>Bochum & Oulu 30 ECTS</i>	Or: Structured Learning (in Cork) - Engaged Research Placement <i>15 ECTS</i>	
Research Methods I <i>5 ECTS</i>	Track 4 Governance of Post-Industrial Cities <i>Zagreb & Deusto 30 ECTS</i>	Research Methods III (online) <i>5 ECTS</i>	
Bochum	Cork, Istanbul, Bochum or Zagreb	Either Liège or Cork	All RePIC universities

Challenges:

Sem 1: 60 students at one location

Sem 2: Students physically at 4 universities, but not at the other 4

Sem 3: More visibility of two partners

Sem 4: steering student flows, organising joint thesis supervision

Sem 1-3 general: 3 partners not included in physical mobility

Tipps & Tricks for a successful Joint Study Programme Development

How to start

Ask yourself and your partner(s) the following questions 😊:

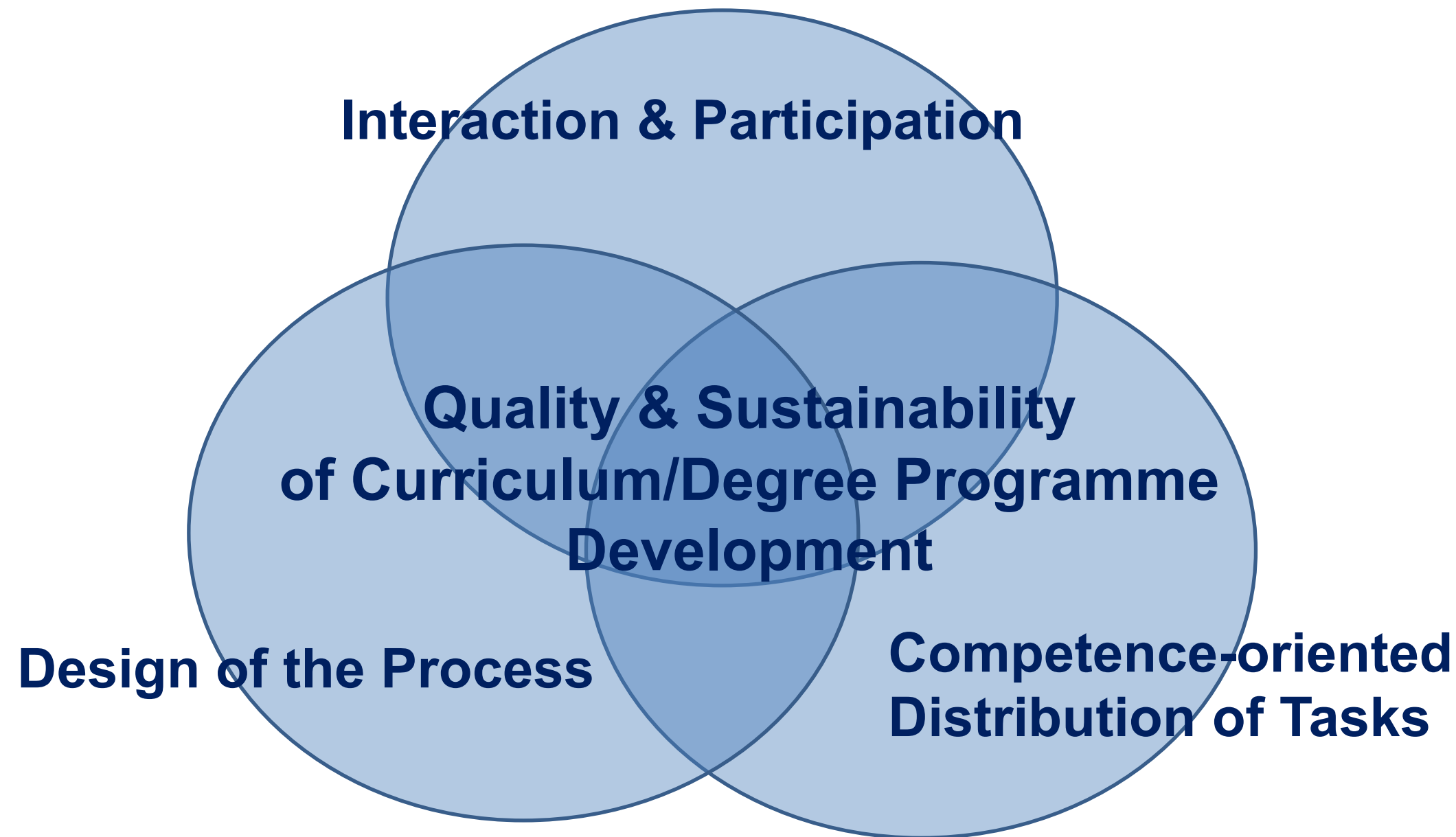
- ✓ Are there any degree programmes that could serve as a basis for such cooperation?
- ✓ Should a cooperation be piloted at first?
- ✓ How far should the cooperation go: complete alignment (=Joint Degree) or a more loosely organised form of cooperation (Double Degree/Double Degree Option) ?
- ✓ Should the joint programme apply to all enrolled students?
- ✓ How quickly do you want to be able to enrol the first students?
- ✓ Which formal steps are necessary at my own and the partner universities to implement a degree programme?
- ✓ ...

„Ugly Five“* of the Development of Degree Programmes

- Initiation of degree programme development by external stakeholders
- Lack of knowledge among the partners about legal and other requirements, such as didactics, statistics....
- Different prioritisation of decisions in the development process by different stakeholders, e.g. content/forms of teaching/assessment \Leftrightarrow resources/legal safeguarding
- Relevant stakeholders are not or involved too late
- Concentration on just a few steps in the development process

■ © Lippold/Fritsch: Conference Marburg 2019

Triple Helix Modell of Collaborative Action in Degree Programme Development



Fritsch, A. & Lippold, S. (2019) :Hochschuldidaktik, Curriculumsentwicklung, Studiengangsdesign. Form Follows Function - Ein Werkstattbericht. In *Hochschuldidaktik erforscht Qualität: Profilbildung und Wertefragen*. Berlin, pp. 129
English „abstract: <https://eua.eu/component/attachments/attachments.html?task=attachment&id=1980> (retrieved 08.04.2022)

Interaction & Participation: What is helpful

- Regular exchange between all relevant stakeholders
 - ✓ Creating occasions for communication
- Changing perspectives as a method when the discussion gets stuck
- Faculties, teaching staff and relevant staff working in the areas of administration, higher education didactics and quality assurance/management work together to develop the degree programme
- A university culture that encourages open, respectful and discourse-oriented communication

Distribution of Tasks: What is helpful

- One "Caretaker" for the development process
- To involve existing expertise at the university at an early stage
- To define clear responsibilities early in the process
- To ensure that faculties, teaching staff and relevant staff in the areas of administration, higher education didactics and quality management are equal partners in the process, each with different competencies and tasks
- To agree on binding timetables

Design of the Process : What is helpful

- Integration of all structural, legal, organisational, QA and didactic aspects in the process of the degree programme development
- Equal priority for all the steps from the development of the curriculum to the start of the degree programme :
 - ✓ Development of the curriculum in the faculty
 - ✓ Approval processes in the faculty and the university
 - ✓ Accreditation/Validation
 - ✓ Preparation of the necessary organisational steps to enrol the first cohort

Lessons Learned

It is simply not enough to bring academics together in a working group to develop a degree programme. Other relevant stakeholders from all partners must be involved from the start in the development process.

- ✓ Before the development process starts, the legal requirements and other “red lines” in the partner countries must be known to all those involved in the development process.
- ✓ Joint procedures and processes need to be visualized clearly and agreed with the relevant units in the administration of all partners.
- ✓ Clear responsibilities for the development process and the timetable are absolute necessary.
- ✓ Openness in the discussion to deviate from the usual processes at one's own university, and to work together to find solutions and to seek and use all possible legal and organisational leeway is essential.

Thank you for your attention!

