

Information Sheet – Transcripts/Diploma Supplements, Parchments & Conferring

This information sheet provides guidelines, key principles and practical information regarding the development and production of **transcripts and Diploma Supplements** for collaborative programmes, as well as details of the production and approval process for collaborative degree award **parchments**, and the range of possible arrangements with respect to the organisation of the appropriate **conferring** ceremony.

Collaborative Programme Basics: the programme approval mechanism

The **Programme Development, Approval and Review Framework (PDARF)** provides the relevant information for supporting programme development, including collaborative programmes, within the University (see <https://www.ucd.ie/registry/staff/registryservices/curriculum/programmeapprovalpdarf/>).

All collaborative programmes must be approved through the normal routes for new programme approval. The relevant forms for collaborative programmes include Global Partnerships Proposal Form - Strategic Case, PDARF2, PDARF3 and PDARF4, and where a collaboration is being introduced into an already existing programme, PDARF7 is to be used in place of PDARF2 and PDARF3. All of the forms are available at the above weblink.

All forms must be completed and submitted to the relevant College Executive and/or Governing Board, as well as the University Management Team (UMT) where applicable in accordance with the procedures outlined in the PDARF approval process.

Collaborative Programme Co-ordinators should list as much detail as possible about the collaborative programme on these forms – all of this information is critical for ensuring that the University can support the programme effectively.

Transcripts and Diploma Supplements

There are a number of key principles and points of information that relate to the availability and production of UCD transcripts and Diploma Supplements, as follows:

- European legislation requires third-level institutions to offer a Diploma Supplement. The Diploma Supplement may be produced according to a template jointly developed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO (which UCD has adopted). It has eight sections identifying the holder of the qualification; the qualification, its level and function; the contents and results gained; certification of the supplement; details of the national higher education system plus any additional information.¹ The purpose of the Diploma Supplement is to complement the degree award parchment by providing more detailed information about the student and their programme of study, including the full list of all modules taken and their grades/marks², and the level of the programme (on the National Framework of Qualifications).
- In December 2013, the Irish Higher Education Authority (HEA) announced that UCD had been awarded the Diploma Supplement (DS) Label by the EU. The DS Label is awarded to European higher education institutions that show excellence in the production and promotion of this valuable document. UCD is the first Irish University to win the DS Label award. This formal recognition by the EU of the UCD Diploma Supplement is extremely valuable insofar as it

¹Further information about the Diploma Supplement may be obtained at <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/inclusive-and-connected-higher-education/diploma-supplement>.

²For more information about how modules from other institutions are included see *Information Sheet – Assessment (modules)*.

helps to facilitate negotiation with collaborating partners in relation to the production of Diploma Supplements for students on collaborative programmes.

- The UCD transcript and the Diploma Supplement serve exactly the same purpose. Prior to the development of a Europe-wide Diploma Supplement model, UCD had already developed its transcript template to accommodate the additional information required by the Diploma Supplement. UCD can therefore produce both a transcript and a Diploma Supplement for any of its programmes, including collaborative programmes.
- Because the UCD transcript can be produced by UCD itself, there is greater flexibility available to customise it for collaborative programmes. There is less flexibility with regard to the Diploma Supplement as this template is standardised.
- It is possible to develop **academic transcripts** for collaborative programmes which can include the details of all institutions which may have been involved in the design and development of a collaborative programme (pending negotiation with each institution). Joint transcripts are normally only produced for truly 'joint' awards.⁵ This means, for example, that where a student may attend two institutions in the context of a joint programme contributed to by multiple institutions, they can receive a transcript which can include the logos and basic details of all institutions which contributed to the design and development of the programme. While there is flexibility with respect to the development of a joint transcript, the drawback is that these are individually customised for each programme, which is a process that is labour intensive and time-consuming. This also means that it is normally not possible for students on collaborative programmes where a joint transcript is to be made available to avail of the UCD online document self-service function.⁶
- It is possible to develop **Diploma Supplements**⁷ for collaborative programmes which can include the details of all institutions which may have been involved in the design and development of a collaborative programme (pending negotiation with each institution). Joint Diploma Supplements are likewise normally only produced for truly 'joint' awards. The logos and the information about all partner institutions can also appear in the Diploma Supplement, normally in dedicated sections of the document (as opposed to, for example, all institutional logos appearing as a header on each page of the Diploma Supplement, as may be the case with joint transcripts). The Diploma Supplement will also normally include the academic award accreditation and recognition system of each country in which each institution is based. The Diploma Supplement is available to all UCD Graduates from 2005 onwards. It is issued in English and is provided free of charge to every student (including those on collaborative programmes) upon the award of their degree.⁸
- In the case of collaborative programmes leading to joint degree awards, it is important to determine between all participating institutions the process, and institution responsible for, the production of the joint transcript/Diploma Supplement, the details of which would normally be contained in the Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement. It is normally the case in joint degree award programmes that each student will have a 'Home' institution, which in UCD is defined as "*normally the institution to which a student is initially admitted and registered, and from which a student will normally receive their award parchment, transcript and/or Diploma Supplement.*"⁹ In a collaboration involving one or more partner institutions, it is normally the case that each partner will take responsibility for developing the joint transcript/Diploma Supplement for those students who call that institution their 'home' institution. The partner institutions will normally share all the relevant information about the students, the institutions themselves, and the qualifications and recognition system in each country to facilitate the development of these documents by each institution.
- In UCD, the basic outline of the process for design and development of joint transcripts and/or Diploma Supplements is as follows:
 - As part of the approval process for a new collaborative programme (or introduction of a collaboration into an already existing programme) an *Implementation Management Plan* is drafted which draws upon the

⁵ For more information about award types (including the definition of 'joint' awards) see *Information Sheet – Glossary of Terms and Information Sheet – Collaborative Award Types and Taxonomies*.

⁶ See <https://www.ucd.ie/students/studentdesk/documents/transcript/>

⁷ For an example of an anonymised UCD Diploma Supplement see <https://www.ucd.ie/students/studentdesk/documents/diplomasupplement/>

⁸ Information on how students can access their Diploma Supplement online is available at <https://www.ucd.ie/students/studentdesk/documents/onlinedocuments/>

⁹ See the glossary of terms in *Information Sheet – Glossary of Terms*.

information normally contained in the relevant PDARF proposal forms (including and especially *PDARF4: Collaborative Programme Supplement*);

- The *Implementation Management Plan*, where appropriate (ie for truly joint award programmes only), must include the details of the arrangements for production of the joint transcript and/or Diploma Supplement;
 - The Academic Secretariat, which is responsible for drafting the *Implementation Management Plan*, will liaise with the relevant staff in Administrative Services (which is responsible for the design and production of transcripts and Diploma Supplements) to determine the process and associated timelines for production of the joint transcript and/or Diploma Supplement, and will communicate the details of this to the UCD co-ordinator of the collaborative programme.
- In the case of all other types of collaborative programme (ie those not leading to a truly 'joint' degree award), it is normally the student's 'home' institution which is responsible for the production of the transcript/Diploma Supplement. This means that the student will have a transcript/Diploma Supplement from their 'home' institution with the details of their programme of study, and may also obtain a second (or any additional) transcript from any other institution which they attended which provides information about any modules taken at that institution by the student.

Parchments

The University participates in a number of different modes of collaboration with other institutions, both within and outside of Ireland.¹⁰ Programmes leading to **joint degree awards** are unique amongst this list – such programmes lead to a single joint degree award parchment, usually with the logos of all institutions which a given student attended. The parchments for all other forms of collaboration are the same as the normal UCD parchment. **This section therefore only relates to joint parchments for joint degree awards.** There are a number of key principles and points of information that relate to the production of UCD joint parchments, as follows:

- It is important for staff involved in discussions regarding a collaboration to ascertain at the outset of any negotiations the mode of collaboration which will apply – provision of a joint degree award has a number of significant legal implications and requires detailed co-operation between the relevant administrative staff in all collaborating institutions.
- The basic, outline arrangements relating to the production of degree award parchments are as follows: these are developed via the UCD Conferring Unit¹¹ in consultation with the UCD Registrar and the National University of Ireland (NUI) and follow a standard format.
- With respect to **joint degree award parchments**, the following general principles apply:
 - Negotiation is required regarding the production of joint degree parchments between UCD and all other collaborating institutions, and it is necessary for the relevant administrative staff from each institution to be involved in such discussions (normally the Academic Secretariat and the Conferring Unit in UCD).
 - During such negotiations, it is important to determine the process, and institution responsible for, the production of the joint degree award parchments (the details of this would normally be contained in the Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement, as well as in the *Implementation Management Plan*). Note that, as with the production of joint transcripts and Diploma Supplements, it is normally the case that each partner will take responsibility for developing the joint degree award parchment for those students who call that institution their 'home' institution. The partner institutions will normally share all the relevant information about the students, and their requirements in relation to the content, wording and format of the degree award parchment, to facilitate the development of joint degree award parchments by each institution.
 - It is normally the case that a student will only receive a parchment with the logos and other formal details of the institutions that the individual student attended. Where there are multiple institutions involved in a collaborative programme, it is not normally possible to include the details of all institutions involved in the development and overall management of the collaborative programme on the student's degree

¹⁰ A description of each of these is provided in *Information Sheet– Collaborative Award Types and Taxonomies*.

¹¹ <http://www.ucd.ie/confer/>

award parchment, as this would imply that a student receives an award from an institution that they may have never actually attended.

- Arising from UCD's relationship with the National University of Ireland (NUI), both the UCD crest and NUI crest must appear on all UCD parchments, including those for joint degree awards.
- It is most commonly the case that a student will attend two institutions during the course of their programme of study, and will therefore receive a joint degree award parchment with the details of both institutions. A sample copy of a joint degree award parchment is included below (image may be expanded).



- Joint degree award parchments are designed and developed on a case-by-case basis and for each joint degree award programme, and these may be different depending on the nature of a particular collaboration, the nature of the partnership, the type of collaborating institutions, and the specific legal requirements of each institution.
- In UCD, the basic outline of the process for design and development of joint degree award parchments is as follows:
 - As part of the approval process for a new collaborative programme (or introduction of a collaboration into an already existing programme) an *Implementation Management Plan* is drafted which draws upon the information normally contained in the relevant PDARF proposal forms (including and especially *PDARF4: Collaborative Programme Supplement*);
 - The *Implementation Management Plan*, where appropriate (ie for truly joint award programmes only), must include the details of the arrangements for production of the joint parchment;
 - The Academic Secretariat, which is responsible for drafting the *Implementation Management Plan*, will liaise with the relevant staff in the Conferring Unit (which is responsible for the design and production of parchments) to determine the process and associated timelines for production of the joint degree award parchment, and the Conferring Unit will communicate the details of this to the Academic Secretariat and/or the UCD director of the collaborative programme.
 - The Conferring Unit is responsible for liaising directly with the NUI to ensure that all requirements are met in relation to any joint degree award parchment.
 - Final approval of any joint degree award parchment lies with the UCD Registrar and Deputy President. The Conferring Unit and the Academic Secretariat will liaise directly with the UCD Registrar and Deputy President to seek their approval of any such parchment. As and when approval has been obtained, or where there may be a need for further discussion regarding the content or format of the

parchment, the Academic Secretariat will liaise directly with the UCD collaborative programme co-ordinator and/or the relevant staff in any partner institution as appropriate.

Conferring

- With the exception of joint degree awards, the arrangements for the conferring of degree awards associated with any collaborative programme follow the normal procedures and timeframes as for all other normal UCD awards – further details may be obtained from the UCD Conferring Unit (www.ucd.ie/confer).
- With regard to **joint degree awards**, there are three options relating to the conferring ceremony for these awards:
 - **Option 1** – the partners in the collaboration may agree to conduct a single conferring ceremony for all students at a neutral venue (ie none of the collaborating institutions). In such instances, there must be a clear identification of the entity responsible for production of the joint degree award parchments, and a timeframe for the production of these parchments must be agreed.
 - **Option 2** – the partners in the collaboration may agree to rotate the responsibility for holding the conferring ceremony for all students on the programme in a given year or years between the participating institutions. In instances where UCD assumes this responsibility, the timing and conduct of the ceremony must coincide with existing timeframes for other UCD conferrals.
 - **Option 3** – the partners in the collaboration may agree that groups of students within the same cohort may graduate from different institutions simultaneously (depending, for example, on which institution they are attending at the time of completion of their programme).
- Any specific arrangements for conferring which may be agreed by the partners to a joint degree award must be discussed with, and approved by, the UCD Conferring Unit. The UCD Conferring Unit must be notified well in advance of any students to be added to a given conferring ceremony, so that the requisite arrangements may be made to issue invitations and to ensure they are called at the conferring ceremony itself.
- Where students on a joint degree award programme are conferred in an institution that is not UCD, they will also be conferred in UCD *in absentia*.
- Details regarding the conferring arrangements should be articulated in the Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement, and in the relevant *Implementation Management Plan*.