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МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ ОПЫТ И ОТЕЧЕСТВЕННАЯ  
ПРАКТИКА**

FORMATION OF THE SYSTEM OF THE EUROPEAN AREA  
OF HIGHER EDUCATION:  
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND DOMESTIC  
PRACTICE

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## ***8 The Concept of Practically oriented Training in the Framework of the Implementation of Joint Educational Programs***

The concept of practical training in the framework of the implementation of joint educational programs was developed in accordance with the national legislation in the field of professional training of higher education specialists (Education Code, Ministry of Education Order No. 628 of July 30, 2015 “On the adoption of measures for introduction into the national education system tools of the European Higher Education Area for the period of 2015-2018”, the state program “Education and youth policy for 2016-2020”) as well as the provisions of the Road Map of Higher Education reforming in Belarus.

In the development of the concept the changes that are intended to be introduced in the national qualifier of qualifications (currently being discussed) were outlined, as well as interim results of the discussion of the changes in educational standards.

### **1. General characteristics**

The introduction of the concept developed for the implementation of joint educational programs is intended to be implemented in the system of retraining and for the second stage of higher education (Master’s degree):

*Study mode* – part-time (with the elements of distance learning).

The program assumes the possibility of obtaining two diplomas (Polessky State University and WSB University in Gdansk or the diploma of Polessky State University and the certificate of WSB University in Gdansk).

*Language of instruction*: English (at least 30-50% depending on the model selected). Education is carried out mainly on a fee basis with the assistance of grants of the Erasmus Plus program.

Joint educational programs are supposed to be implemented at the Faculty of Economics and the Faculty of Continuous Training of Polessky State University, while the disciplines provided by the curriculum are supposed to be taught by the teaching staff

of Polesky State University, lecturers of WSB University in Gdansk and invited native and foreign scientists and practitioners.

## **2. The relevance, goals and objectives of the joint educational program**

Economic growth in the countries with transitional economies, according to the studies of international organizations, depends largely on the quality of human capital. Its impact is estimated at 64 %. An important indicator of the state of the country's human capital and the main indicators signaling the sustainable development of education are Education Index, Human Development Index, the share of budget expenditures on the education development, the number of students of institutions providing higher education per 10 thousand people, the weight of foreign students in higher education institutions and some others.

According to Education Index that is taken into account while determining the level of economic development, the Republic of Belarus takes the 20 st place (Index 0,834), which corresponds to the criterion of developed countries.

The implementation of joint educational programs in the pan-European space is a priority task facing modern universities, as it promotes economic growth as a result of knowledge sharing. For the Republic of Belarus that joined the Bologna process the implementation of joint educational programs is relevant and important in the context of growing integration and globalization trends, in the light of the intensification of the export of educational services and the necessity to bring the educational process to a qualitatively new level.

The joint educational program being developed is a unique educational product. It is predetermined by the following factors:

- the program is variable; it can be implemented in various forms with varying degrees of integration of the programs of partner universities, as well as taking into account the level of student competences and their financial capabilities;
- a significant part of the educational process is carried out in English (de facto being the main language used in international practice), which makes it possible to train specialists in economics who are able to use English in their professional activities;

- an interdisciplinary approach is applied that allows mastering a full range of professional knowledge, skills and knowledge necessary for successful work in the economic profile in the field of business management;

- the program allows obtaining two diplomas of Master's degree (or a diploma of a national university and a certificate of a Polish partner institution), which is a confirmation of the quality of teaching and the level of training of students of both universities; the variability of the program allows training foreign citizens as well, which stimulates the export of educational services.

The goal of implementing the joint educational program is to increase the competitiveness of the national system of education as a result of highly qualified specialist training adapted to the common European market, as well as the increase in the export of educational services.

The tasks of implementing joint educational programs are as follows:

- development of student mobility in the form of semester exchanges within the framework of interuniversity agreements and cooperation;

- development of the institute of invited lecturers;

- implementation of programs that allow obtaining a national diploma and a certificate of a foreign partner institution on the basis of a distance learning form as well (with the possibility of training foreign citizens);

- implementation of joint author's programs in foreign language with the possibility of issuing a double diploma at the second stage of training or in the system of retraining.

### **3. Target audience of joint educational programs**

The goals and objectives of implementing joint educational programs determine the criteria for recruiting students. It is assumed that this program will presuppose training people who have a different level and profile of training, as well as various professional experience.

The program is targeted towards several main target groups:

The first group consists of graduates (or students of recent years) of universities: bachelors and specialists. Training on the

proposed program will enable them in addition to the existing basic knowledge and competencies to acquire deep specialized knowledge in the field of business management within the framework of the program “Business Administration”. Teaching a part of the disciplines in English, including foreign professors, will allow students to master Business English at the professional level necessary for working in international markets.

The second target group consists of people with higher education, economic profile, mainly economists and managers who have work experience after completing Bachelor’s degree, as well as specialists who completed scientifically oriented Master’s program. They will be able to obtain economic and managerial knowledge in the field of company management necessary for company management and its structural divisions, for the adoption of legally sound management decisions and practical experience, for conducting scientific research being post-graduate students.

In the light of the integration of the Belarusian and European markets, the forthcoming accession of the Republic of Belarus to the World Trade Organization, the specialists working in state bodies, as well as in large international companies oriented towards foreign markets and cooperation with foreign partners can get interest to the program of the kind. Training under the program will give this category of students an opportunity to study thoroughly the features of the organization of international business, familiarize themselves with the practice of foreign firms during the internship.

The program will attract foreign students planning to work in companies oriented towards Belarusian and foreign markets, as well as in international structures.

#### **4. Comparative advantages of joint educational programs**

The advantage for the student is the perfection of foreign language knowledge, the choice of the university that is the leader in the chosen scientific direction, the possibility of obtaining European experience, obtaining European diploma. In addition, within

the framework of joint educational programs, it is possible to obtain qualifications that domestic universities cannot offer.

For the teaching staff new opportunities for professional growth and cooperation can be opened in the framework of this activity: modernization of the curricula and teaching technologies, and as a result, universities can receive added value in the form of higher quality and competitive educational programs. Within the framework of the joint program, the university can receive international accreditation, which is a signal of high quality for the educational services market helping to increase the competitiveness of the university, allowing attracting more students and implementing its mission effectively.

### **5. Peculiarities and models for implementing joint educational program**

Belarusian and Polish partner universities have the opportunity for networking in the implementation of joint educational programs at the level of retraining in the system of postgraduate education for adults (the program of retraining “Business Administration”, implemented at Polessky State University and the MBA program of WSB University in Gdansk and also at the second level of higher education (MBA program).

Several models have been developed for the implementation of joint educational programs on the basis of partner universities:

#### ***1. Introductory model***

Within the framework of the proposed model, WSB University in Gdansk actively participates in the implementation of the joint educational program at Polessky State University. Once a year, an assessment of the quality of education is provided by the coordinator from WSB University in Gdansk.

Within the framework of the proposed model of cooperation partner university undertakes delivering guest lectures on the agreed topics.

Once a year study visits to the Polish partner university, visits to a number of Polish companies are offered for the students of the program, as well as seminars for lecturers of the University to raise their qualification.



The language of instruction is Russian, individual lectures can be delivered in English.

Upon completion of the training process the students are granted a national diploma and a certificate of a Polish partner institution.

The implementation of this model is possible both for retraining program “Business Administration” and practical master program in specialty “Business Administration” in part-time form of training.

### ***2. Extended model***

This model, in contrast to the introductory model, provides 30 % of the total number of courses (six modules) delivered in English by Belarusian and Polish lecturers at Polesky State University.

One additional module can be implemented at WSB University.

Also, an internship can be organized on the basis of Polish partner institution.

The language of instruction is Russian and English.

Upon completion of training students are granted a diploma of a national university and a certificate of a foreign partner institution.

### ***3. Advanced model***

This model is an enlargement of the introductory and extended models and presupposes at least 50 % of the courses to be taught in the English language (distance mode of training can be used).

The program is formed in two interrelated academic blocks:

1) theoretical disciplines, focused primarily on the development of general economic issues and management of the firm.

2) disciplines of an applied character allowing students (in comparison with bachelor degree) to study specific subject areas of economics and management and acquire practical skills in identifying and analyzing problems and solutions to specific management problems; to obtain practical skills in applying special methods of economic analysis in relation to the subject areas listed above.

The proposed joint program combines deep and extensive theoretical courses of the obligatory component with more applied, innovative author's courses developed by the teaching staff of partner universities.

At the end of the training - the fourth semester, before the preparation of the master's thesis – it is possible to divide the students of the program into specialized groups related to specific subject areas.

At the same time, students should fulfill the requirements of the educational standards of the Republic of Belarus and fully master the obligatory component of the standard. In accordance with the current standard, the following components are classified as the state component:

1. Managerial Economics – 96 hours.
2. Business statistics – 134 hours.
3. Management and organizational behavior – 126 hours.
4. Financial accounting – 102 hours
5. Marketing management – 148 hours.
6. Strategic management – 126 hours
7. Information technologies in management – 92 hours.

Within the framework of the proposed model the teaching staff of WSB University in Gdansk deliver the following disciplines in English:

1. Managerial Economics – 28 hours.
2. Negotiation and communication in business – 16 hours.
3. Strategic management – 28 hours.
4. Corporate finance management – 28 hours.
5. Management and leadership – 16 hours.
6. Process and project management – 28 hours.
7. Change management – 16 hours.
8. Management Controlling – 16 hours.
9. Enterprise in financial markets – 16 hours.
10. Mergers and acquisitions – 16 hours.
11. Business etiquette – 16 hours.
12. Intercultural Communication – 16 hours.

The language of instruction is Russian and English.

Upon completion of training the students are granted two diplomas – a diploma of a national university and a foreign partner institution.

In the proposed models of joint educational programs all the main elements of the training process should be agreed upon by partner universities; built-in mobility is provided in the partner institution, which is automatically recognized by both parties; joint management of training is conducted; diplomas (degrees) recognized by partner universities are granted.

## **6. Distance learning**

In addition to contact hours, training can additionally be provided in distance mode using the Moodle platform (mixed training). By mixed training we mean the process and result of integration of traditional forms of learning and distance learning methods using information and computer technologies.

Distance education in the Belarusian higher school is not as widely used as in the European educational space, although recently the process has been intensified.

To provide distance learning the course should have a modular structure. The Moodle platform should contain not only key materials for training, but also a bank of materials for independent work, as well as various creative and problem tasks. An effective form of distance learning can serve only as a model that allows students to organize interaction not only with the learning tool, but also directly with a tutor, which is possible through interactive types of tasks and built-in feedback channels. In this context, distance learning will help to solve the tasks of strengthening the active role of the learner, and will provide the opportunity to communicate with various specialists, other students, native speakers creating language environment.

As one of the criteria of the quality of teaching in the university, a linguistic criterion is singled out. Nowadays the teaching staff of Belarusian universities don't speak English fluently. The problem should be solved with the help of the following activities: intensive language courses, intensive short-term language courses abroad. Delivering lectures in a foreign language requires the creation of new teaching and methodological support, addi-

tional financial costs, but the profit can be 2-3 times higher. In addition, it is necessary to hold seminars for mastering intercultural communication skills. Also, a system of motivation for learning a foreign language should be created in order to further elaboration and implementation of the courses in English, as well as the increase of the publication activity in English (additional bonuses, general pedagogical load decrease, possibility to participate in foreign internships).

The application of the proposed technologies and approaches will help to improve the level of foreign language skills, prepare students for the use of English in future professional activities, enhance the mobility of students, undergraduates and teaching staff, increase the attractiveness of joint educational programs.

### **7. The demand for graduates and the possibility of their employment**

Specialists trained in the framework of joint educational programs will be in demand:

- in Belarusian companies oriented towards the European market;
- in Polish companies operating in the market of the Republic of Belarus, including those investing in the Belarusian economy;
- in research and educational institutions;
- in government bodies.

The main activities of the graduates of the program can be as follows:

- administration of Belarusian and foreign business;
- advising in the field of economics and company management;
- participation in the development of draft normative legal acts;
- scientific and research, expert and analytical work.

Despite the fact that the processes of integration of business environment of the Republic of Belarus into the common economic space has been going on for several decades, the bulk of Belarusian economists and managers working in business and

government agencies happened to be not fully prepared for practical “barrier-free” interaction with foreign companies. Foreign companies that trade with the Republic of Belarus and operate in the Belarusian market, in their turn, need economists and managers who know the specifics of Belarusian economy and management. In this regard, Belarusian and foreign companies, and, to some extent, state bodies need specialists who are not just proficient in English, but who are proficient in economic terminology in English.

### **8. Competences formed in the training process**

The implementation of joint educational programs is based on the application of the competence model, which is based not on the formation of complex knowledge on specific disciplines, but complex competences that are in demand in the field of professional activity.

The list of necessary competences in the framework of joint educational program is formulated as follows:

- fundamental knowledge in the field of specialization necessary for the realization of professional abilities;
- system-analytical skills allowing to assess constant changes in the field of professional activity;
- the ability to develop proposals to improve the current situation in the professional sphere;
- skills and techniques for solving complex economic problems;
- understanding the general patterns of economic development and mutual influence of the economies of the world;
- knowledge of professional English;
- skills in the effective use of computer technology and the Internet for business purposes;
- interpersonal and intercultural communication skills;
- professional competencies required for scientific research.

To create and manage the competencies necessary for the effective implementation of professional activities in industry, we propose an algorithm for managing competencies, the implemen-

tation of which must be carried out with the participation of specially created industry commissions of employers.

In joint educational programs it is proposed to focus on the following list of competencies:

*AK – academic competences*

*General Academic Competencies:*

- ability and readiness for continuous learning, both formal and informal;
- competencies that presuppose forming practical work skills in specific areas;
- competencies in scientific research;
- preparation and implementation of research projects in the field of professional activity;
- analysis and generalization of the results of scientific research in accordance with the requirements of modern economic science;
- work with modern software in the course of scientific research;
- linguistic competence associated with the use of oral and written speech skills in English;
- Computer competence associated with the use of computer and the Internet for professional business purposes.

*SLK – social and personal competences*

- cultural and value orientations necessary for conducting business negotiations, building the work of the structural unit, interaction with colleagues:
- the ability and readiness to continually improve your own intellectual and general cultural level;
- ability to work in a team and effectively represent the results of the work;
- ability to adapt to constantly changing conditions.
- In our opinion, we should focus on the group of professional competencies, which, requires a broader interpretation than it is presented in the current educational standard.

*PC – professional competences*

- skills of applying the basic economic models in solving typical management problems of optimization at the local and global level;
- statistical skills in solving practical problems in the field of modern economics and management;
- managerial decision-making skills: justification and decision-making within the scope of official duties; analysis and development of solutions to the problem; organization and optimization of the work of executors, the adoption of managerial decisions and the perception of managerial innovation;
- skills in developing and making effective management decisions in the selection of optimal sources of financing;
- skills necessary to continuously improve the company's activities in order to strengthen its competitive advantage;
- legal skills required to carry out professional activities in business management;
- understanding the impact of human resources and the basic principles of personnel management on the achievement of the organization's goals.

## **9. Conditions of enrollment**

Admission to the joint educational program is carried out on the basis of competitive selection among people with a diploma of higher education (both first and second level, Bachelor and Master), as well as graduate students have the opportunity to study (the level of retraining in the introductory model) and foreign citizens with a diploma of higher education.

Candidates who are enrolled on a second-level joint MBA program must additionally have professional work experience (minimum 3 years of work, as an additional requirement – 1 year in the field of management).

Entrance examinations consist of a written examination in the main discipline of the training area, as well as additional examination in economics (for those who do not have economic background) and an oral interview in English in accordance with a jointly developed interview program (plus international certificate confirming the level of English). The interview is conducted by a

commission, which includes a representative of the Polish partner institution.

For students entering the joint retraining program only oral interview is conducted in English.

## **10. Polish higher education and organizational forms of a double degree in international education programmes – experience of WSB University in Gdansk**

### **Internationalisation of education**

Positive influence of internationalisation of education has been proclaimed by international institutions (e.g. UNESCO) since the middle of the 20th century. For a long time there had been no tools that would have significantly affected the growth of mobility in higher education, however later on, along with the advancement of European integration, there were some mechanisms developed which allowed academic mobility to become a revolutionised process: in 1987 the European Committee established the ERASMUS programme (European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) – which is now referred to as Erasmus+. Many years of experience and research surveys of participants of the programme confirm their professional development, widely recognised by employers (Bracht et al. 2006). The programme positively affects breaking cross-cultural barriers among its participants and among other students who study with the participants of mobility programmes.

In Europe, there were several milestones in the process of higher education internationalisation: the TEMPUS programme (Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies) in 1990, the Bologna declaration signed in 1999 which resulted in the establishment of EHEA (European Higher Education Area). Furthermore, there were some formation areas developed and implemented for the National Qualification Frameworks which were established within the framework of the Bologna process. They are intended to facilitate mobility through harmonisation and approval of education achievements recognised outside home universities.



Considering a global perspective, some particular significance of support granted to internationalisation of education has been assigned to such international organisations as UNESCO and OECD. At a regional level, that role is performed by such organisations as, for example, NORDPLUS dedicated to the Nordic and Baltic countries, CEEPUS for Austria and the countries of Southern and Eastern Europe and the funds of the Visegrad Group for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The largest organisation dedicated for Asian countries is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with the UMAP (University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific). The Fulbright programme supports mobility between the United States and other countries. There is a number of other local, supra-regional and bilateral programmes, such as ICI, which joins the EU and Australia, South Korea and Japan, or ALFA oriented towards cooperation with Latin America.

At present, over 80 % of students learn in the countries of the G20 group, and 75 % of foreigners study in the OECD countries. International students represent 11 % of all the students enrolled at master's or equivalent programmes in the OECD countries, about twice as many as for bachelor's or equivalent programmes. The OECD report of 2016 provides an answer to the following question: where do international students come from and where do they go? "The United States hosts 21 % of all international students enrolled in a programme at the master's or equivalent level in OECD countries. This is the largest share, followed by the United Kingdom (16 %), France and Germany (both 11 %), and Australia (8 %). At the doctoral or equivalent level, the top five countries remain the same but the market is more concentrated: the United States has a much larger share (38 %), whereas the United Kingdom (13 %), France (8 %), Australia and Germany (both 5 %) have smaller shares. In terms of countries of origin, 23 % of international students studying in OECD countries come from China, more than from any other country, followed by India

(8 %) and Germany (4 %). The majority (53 %) come from Asia”<sup>17</sup>.

Of all international students enrolled at the master’s or doctoral level across the OECD countries, the majority (53 %) is from Asia, and 23 % is from China alone. The process of increasing the quality of education provided at Chinese universities may contribute to the limitation of Chinese citizens’ mobility. In the next few years a significant factor fostering mobility of people from that region of the world who shall pursuit their education objectives shall be demographic growth. It is estimated that during the next decade international mobility of students shall maintain its annual growth at the level of 5 % (Kemp, 2016). While the demand shall almost certainly be led by China and India, outward mobility from other countries shall be increasing significantly as well. Globally, it is expected that recruitment of students from such countries as Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Nigeria, Vietnam, Iran, Malaysia, Russia and Ukraine shall indicate further growth.

Student mobility has already gained considerable influence on the budgets of many Western universities and economies of their home countries. Let us have Great Britain as an example: a decline in the number of students recruited from India in 2013 resulted in a loss of \$700 million to the British economy. Nowadays, countries and universities themselves pay much more attention and assign more means to the process of attracting foreign students. The cost of student acquisition grows for the largest players in the market of international education. It is estimated that an average cost of student acquisition to Australia is \$4 000, and to Great Britain it is estimated between \$3 000 and \$5 000. The cost includes international staff support, investment in marketing, agent commission, and for a few universities: also the cost of their overseas representative offices (Kemp 2016). The growing role of internationalisation of education has exerted mobilizing influence not only on education institutions but also on home

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<sup>17</sup> OECD (2016), Education Indicators in Focus, 2016/39 (February), p. 3. Online access: <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/5jm2f77d5wkg-en.pdf?expires=1499692538&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=BA61937E8FC994CAB5A0172B52801F44>.

legislators who have already noticed the need and value of entering international education markets. Hence, relevant legal regulations are implemented and control solutions are reinforced in order to increase international attractiveness of home universities. Furthermore, some particular pricing policies are implemented and adjusted to the levels applied at students' home countries, defining tuition fees at the same or different levels for foreign and home students (Table 6).

**Table 6 – Structure of tuition fees in OECD countries**

<b>Tuition fee structure</b>	<b>OECD countries</b>
Higher tuition fees for foreign students than for home students	Australia, Austria*, Belgium*, Canada, the Czech Republic*, Denmark*, Estonia*, Iceland*, Ireland, the Netherlands*, New Zealand, Poland*, the Russian Federation, Sweden*, Turkey, the United Kingdom* and the United States
Same tuition fees for foreign and home students	France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Poland**, Spain, Switzerland
No tuition fees for either foreign or home students	Finland, Norway

\* For non-European Union or non-European Economic Area.

\*\* For Eastern Partnership students.

*Source: [31 ].*

Apart from factors of strictly market character, which refer to the acquisition of students and tuition fees, the level of internationalisation of education is affected by such elements as an extended education offer and its increasing quality. It is implemented through differentiation of education contents and introduction of courses offered in foreign languages (most often in English). Additionally, introduction of foreign students and foreign academic staff into education programmes and acquisition of international accreditations is reflected in the positions reached in various university rankings; it also positively affects the quality of education (Popowska 2016).

### **Models for the implementation of joint education**

The essence of cooperation entered in the field of international education is to increase the market attractiveness of provided education programmes or to offer education programmes which have been so far unavailable in the particular market. Although it sounds attractive, cooperation requires a lot of organisational efforts on the part of all partner institutions which have decided to implement a joint education project. Such efforts would not be made but for real or expected benefits which are behind particular projects. Anglo-Saxon countries have a great deal of experience in that field, and they are the most frequently chosen destinations for education purposes in many regions of the world. Each British university has developed standards for cooperation with foreign partners by the implementation of proper terminology for the partners and various models of joint education<sup>18</sup>, based on the guidelines included in The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) which is the definitive reference point for all UK higher education providers<sup>19</sup>.

**Table 7 – Models of joint education in the British system of higher education**

<b>Mode of delivery</b>	<b>Single degree</b>	<b>Joint degree</b>	<b>Dual/Double degree</b>	<b>Multiple degree</b>
Single delivery	UK or IPA	Not applicable	IPA	IPAs
Joint delivery	UK plus IPA	UK plus IPA	UK plus IPA	UK plus IPAs

*IPA – International Partner Institution.*

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education assumes various forms for the implementation of joint education, starting from a

<sup>18</sup> See: University of Northampton „Working with Others”, UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality, Chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others, The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, QAA 507 12/12, Gloucester: 2012, online access: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk).

<sup>19</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuringstandardsandquality](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuringstandardsandquality).

franchise programme<sup>20</sup>, to a joint, double or multiple diploma<sup>21</sup>. Depending on the adopted model for the implementation of education programmes, some alternative formulas of delivering particular programmes have been assumed: joint implementation of teaching processes<sup>22</sup>, the Support Provider arrangement<sup>23</sup>, Validation Service<sup>24</sup> which is applied in some exceptional cases, and other forms of education cooperation with entities which prepare for the application to the first-cycle study courses.

In the course of development taking place in the process of internationalisation of education, numerous interpretations of terminology applied in that process have appeared. This article assumes the following systematisation: a joint, double and consecutive degree programme (Knight, 2008):

- a joint degree programme awards one joint qualification upon completion of the collaborative programme requirements established by the partner institutions;

- a double (multiple) degree programme awards two (three or more) individual qualifications at equivalent levels upon the completion of the collaborative programme requirements established by the two (or more) partner institutions;

- a consecutive degree programme awards two different qualifications at consecutive levels upon the completion of the collaborative programme established by the partner institutions.

It should be emphasized that at the international level there are neither formally established requirements nor procedures that

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<sup>20</sup> Where whole or part (for example one year in a two year programme or discrete parts such as individual modules) of a University programme delivered at the University are also delivered and assessed in an institution other than the University.

<sup>21</sup> Joint awards (awarded jointly by two or more awarding bodies), and dual/double or multiple awards (separate qualifications awarded by each awarding body involved in a joint programme).

<sup>22</sup> The University and another institution together design &/or deliver a programme leading to an award of the University. Normally a programme of study which is delivered by staff from both centres, or parts of the programme at each centre.

<sup>23</sup> Involves an element of collaboration where learning facilities and support are offered to a group of students by another organisation. The support provider is not involved in teaching or assessing students. The support provided is not connected to the achievement of programme learning outcomes.

<sup>24</sup> The University may validate a programme (or module) developed by and taught in another institution as of an appropriate standard to lead to an award of the University.

would lead to the approval of joint programmes. This fact is undoubtedly affected by national regulations or their incompleteness in terms of the discussed issues. At the same time, however, it should be noticed that although the idea of having two degrees from two different institutions in two different countries is attractive to students, but careful attention needs to be given to ensuring that the value and recognition of the qualifications are valid and do not violate the premise and academic purpose of a collaborative degree program (Knight 2011). It becomes particularly significant and sensitive for a larger number of partners who implement a joint programme.

Recently, international consecutive degree programmes which offer two consecutive qualifications (most frequently it is a combination of bachelor's and master's levels or a combination of master's and doctorate levels) have been gaining more and more popularity. Relevant qualifications are conferred when all the requirements have been met in the field of both levels of education. Students who participate in such international programmes are mobile, they participate in classes and meet the research requirements for the first degree in one country and requirements for the second degree in the partner institution located in another country (Knight 2011). Such programmes are usually longer than single programmes, however, they can be shorter than the full cycles of both programmes implemented separately.

### **Polish higher education and internationalisation of education**

More and more attention has been paid to internationalisation of higher education also in Poland. The trend is reflected by the fact that this indicator can be traced not only in rankings of universities but also in the process of accreditation of major courses conferred to universities by the Polish Accreditation Committee. The increased significance of the criterion referring to internationalisation of higher education also reflects numerous solutions

suggested in the draft Act on Higher Education submitted by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education<sup>25</sup>.

The draft Act on the Law on Science and Higher Education provides the following possibilities:

- to establish a federal university by a state university and an international scientific institute; the basic task of a federal university shall be running research activities, providing education for doctoral students and students;
- to run study courses by a Polish university and an international scientific institute;
- to run doctoral schools by a university in cooperation with an international scientific institute.

The draft Act upgrades the criterion of internationalisation of education to the level of a criterion applied during the programme evaluation of particular major courses provided by the Polish Accreditation Committee. Furthermore, while issuing his ordinance on the criteria applied during the programme evaluation, the Minister of Science and Higher Education must consider international standards which refer to ensuring proper quality of education<sup>26</sup>. In the draft Act, the criterion referring to internationalisation of scientific research is defined as particularly significant for the evaluation of scientific research performed by the entity applying for accreditation. The draft Act also implements electronic identifiers for scientists, in accordance with international standards.

### **Education provided by Polish universities outside the country**

Regardless of the growing role performed by internationalisation of education, the Polish legislation does not seem to pay any particular attention to the foreign dimension of education provided by Polish institutions of higher education. The lack of detailed legal regulations in the field of establishing foreign divisions which could provide higher education results in the fact that such

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<sup>25</sup> The draft act on Law on Science and Higher Education of 16th Sept. 2017 <http://konstytucjadlanauki.gov.pl> accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> Oct. 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Art. 242 of the draft act on Law on Science and Higher Education of 16th Sept. <http://konstytucjadlanauki.gov.pl> accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> Oct. 2017.

undertakings have to meet strict institutional requirements (establishing faculties or branch faculties, as stated in the new draft act) and to employ additional number of academic staff. Formal and institutional barriers result in the fact that the number of universities which provide higher education outside Poland is relatively low: only [32] universities have been formally granted permission to run branch faculties outside Poland, namely<sup>27</sup>:

- University of Białystok.
- Branch Faculty of Economics and Informatics in Vilnius.
- Katowice School of Economics.
- Branch Faculty in Vienna.
- Branch Faculty in Ostrava.
- University of Social Sciences in Łódź.
- Branch Faculty in London.
- Old Polish University in Kielce.
- Branch Faculty in Dublin.
- Branch Faculty in Lutsk.
- Humanitas University in Sosnowiec
- Branch Faculty in Vsetin.
- Warsaw Management University
- Jan Amos Komeński Branch Faculty in Karvina.
- European University of Law and Administration in Warsaw.
- Branch Faculty of Law in London.
- Branch Faculty of Administration in Brussels.

In most branch faculties located outside Poland education is provided in major courses in Social Sciences (in the field of Economic Sciences and Social Sciences). Only one university (University of Białystok) provides education in the field of Exact Sciences at its Branch Faculty in Vilnius (major course in Informatics).

A low number of universities which provide education outside Poland in an organised way (running branch faculties) is related, first of all, to a necessity of being granted a relevant permission by the Minister of Science and Higher Education, which is issued in the form of an administrative decision after a positive

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.nauka.gov.pl/uczelnie-z-uprawnieniami-do-ksztalcenia-poza-granicami-rp/> accessed on 20 th Nov. 2017.



opinion issued by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. A condition to obtain such a permission is to meet particular requirements which are the same as for establishing branch faculties in Poland.

### **Education in cooperation with a partner university abroad**

Another question comes with education in cooperation with higher education institutions of a foreign country. Referring to the reality of Polish higher education, it is impossible to cooperate in the field of education on the basis of the franchise principle applied, for example, by the British education system. However, it is possible to enter education agreements with a foreign partner, which may result in various organisational forms of education and relevant diplomas conferred after the completion of the required study programmes.

The most common form of academic cooperation in the field of education is the formula of a double diploma. The formula of a joint or multiple diploma is less common. In a situation where it is impossible to confer a diploma of a partner university for any reasons, it is a common practice to enter an agreement confirming validation of the partner's programme quality along with a certificate issued to the graduates in order to confirm the cooperation. It is not explicitly regulated by the Polish law. Such a diploma or a certificate of education quality is not identical with a diploma defined as a certification of the level of completed study courses – it is only a confirmation of the validation of the education quality system defined for a particular programme by the institutions which have signed the document.

### **Education in the formula of a joint and double diploma**

The problem referring to cooperation of Polish and foreign universities in the field of joint study programmes is stated by two regulations of the Higher Education Act, art. 168<sup>28</sup>. In accordance with this article, study courses can be run by various universities, including foreign universities, in cooperation based on the agreement they have entered. The subject of such an agreement might be running study courses in a particular major. Faculties of the

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<sup>28</sup> Higher Education Act (Journal of Laws, No. 2016 item 1842 of 15<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2016).

Polish universities which have entered such an agreement as its Parties, are properly authorised to run study courses in the major defined in the agreement.

The legislator has not defined the scope of such an agreement, the duration time of the study courses for the particular Parties, any methods for the implementation of teaching processes and any principles referring to the funding of such education. It seems that while designing an agreement on joint education, it is possible to apply a general principle of the Polish Civil Code, namely: the freedom of contract principle. While designing such an agreement, the following substantive fields referring to education and to the organisation of education processes should be taken into consideration:

- laws and obligations of the Parties;
- basic questions referring to education programmes and qualifications obtained by graduates (a professional title and the method of its conferment on a graduate, the language of the study courses and the language applied for the verification of the achieved teaching outcomes);
- criteria and principles of recruitment;
- the status of a student at each of the universities which are the Parties of the agreement;
- documentation methods for the course of the study (in accordance with the regulations applied by the countries of the universities which are the Parties of the agreement);
- study regulations, including the scale of grading;
- the type of a diploma conferred on graduates who have completed joint study programmes, in accordance with the regulations applied by the countries of the universities which are the Parties of the agreement;
- principles of financial settlements;
- regulations for the implementation of study courses by the academic staff of the universities which are the Parties of the agreement;
- methods and forms of substantive supervision over a joint education programme;

- regulations for the use of teaching facilities by the Parties of the agreement;
- regulations for any amendments and termination of the agreement.

An agreement should be amended with an education programme (including a description of teaching outcomes, a list of the modules and universities responsible for their implementation)<sup>29</sup>. As stated by the art. 168, paragraph 1, the term jointly run implies that it is unacceptable for the study courses to be run only by one university, whereas the role of the other university is reduced only to diploma issuance or any other organisational (not teaching) activities. While entering any agreements between universities, the following fact should be taken into consideration: an inter-university major must meet the requirements of the Polish legal regulations which apply to all majors, for example, in terms of study programmes, the minimum required number of full-time employed academic staff, formal requirements referring to the layout and content of a diploma. Considering jointly run study courses, a diploma may be issued in accordance with the Polish regulations.

The principles of education provided in the formula of a double diploma are not explicitly regulated by the Polish law system. The system only states some regulations which allow students to have their credits, which have been obtained at the organisational units of their home university or any other universities, including foreign ones<sup>30</sup>, transferred and recognised. The condition which must be met during the transfer of credits obtained at any other university, including a foreign one, in the place of credits granted for the particular classes and internships stated in the study curriculum and education programme, is the confirmation of con-

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<sup>29</sup> Based on: Sylwia Salamon – International Relations Office at the University of Warsaw, *Umowy o wspólnych studiach, Wspólnie prowadzone studia I, II stopnia, jednolite magisterskie zakończone wspólnym dyplomem lub wielokrotnymi dyplomami*, (Note), online: <http://bwz.uw.edu.pl/umowy-o-wspolnych-studiach>, Warszawa, 4th Feb. 2013, accessed on 11th Sept. 2017.

<sup>30</sup> Art. 165 of Higher Education Act (Journal of Laws, No. 2016 item 1842 of 15th Nov. 2016).

sistency between the teaching outcomes that have been achieved during the study mode defined in the study regulations. Students, who wish to have their credits transferred from a university, including a foreign one, are given a number of ECTS points which is assigned to the teaching outcomes achieved after the completion of relevant classes and internships at their home university. Also in this case, the principles of permanent cooperation in the mutual crediting of teaching outcomes achieved at the particular universities should be stated in the agreement entered by the Parties. Such an agreement should particularly define the following:

- the parties of the agreement;
- the subject of the agreement (education programme included);
- principles of cooperation in the mutual mapping of education programmes;
- mutual recognition of methods applied for the verification of the achieved teaching outcomes;
- principles applied for the validation of education programmes;
- principles of the cooperation in the evaluation of education programmes;
- principles and criteria of recruitment;
- methods and forms of substantive supervision over education programmes at the particular units;
- regulations for any amendments and termination of the agreement.

An agreement should be amended with education programmes (i.e.: description of teaching outcomes, a list of modules and methods applied for the verification of the assumed teaching outcomes). In the case of a double diploma, each Party of the agreement issues graduation diplomas in accordance with the regulations applied in its home country – the headquarters of the particular partner.

### **Models of joint education – a case study of WSB University in Gdańsk**

The experience of WSB University in Gdańsk in the field of formalised cooperation in education with a foreign partner started

in 2007, when WSB University in Gdańsk entered its first agreement on a double diploma with a business school faculty (Northampton Business School) of a British university located in Northampton (the Midlands). Both universities declared their will to establish long-term cooperation aimed at mutual academic and organisational development. In the course of time, the reality has confirmed that such apparently lofty formulated statements come as true guidelines for the implementation of subsequent joint projects, let us just mention a direct-entry agreement for the major in finance and accountancy at the bachelor's degree level, or the cooperation referring to the Master of Business Administration programme at the master's degree level.

The model of education applied in the direct-entry agreement assumes providing students with a possibility to complete a full cycle of their education at two universities without a necessity to prolong the time of their study courses. Students are offered a possibility to transfer between both universities within the framework of a specified education programme, having achieved teaching outcomes defined by both parties at their home university. The partner university recognises them as equal with the same level of education at the home university. Hence, considering the direct-entry cooperation between WSB University in Gdańsk and NBS, students who have successfully completed their first and second year of studies and have achieved teaching outcomes specified in the agreement are granted admission to the University of Northampton as entrants to the BA (Hons) International Accounting (top-up).

WSB students' interest in the direct-entry programme has been correlated with the level of tuition fees applied at British universities. At first, the courses were attended by students of Finance run in English by WSB University in Gdańsk, however, since the British government increased the minimal annual tuition fees from £3 000 to £9 000 in 2012, the number of applications has considerably declined. Graduates from the direct-entry programme have easily found their place in the international labour market, and this fact has been undoubtedly affected by international experience which those students acquired during their studies.

An important element of academic cooperation is systemic validation of teaching outcomes. The experience of WSB University in Gdańsk has been acquired during the cooperation in the field of a double diploma with the British university as well as with Italian universities and a French business school. The British University of Northampton and the University of Sannio in Benevento are state universities, whereas the University of International Studies of Rome, UNINT and the French ESC Troyes are non-public universities, similarly to WSB University in Gdańsk. The acquired experience allow us to conclude that the form of university ownership determines neither the method applied for the implementation of the joint programme nor the system applied for the assurance of education quality in any possible way. Despite the fact that cooperating universities come from different national education systems, the applied quality solutions have some common features.

**Table 8 – The programmes implemented by WSB University in Gdańsk in cooperation with the foreign partners**

			Bachelor's degree level		Master's degree level	
	Name of the University	Country	Finance and Accounting	Business Administration	Finance and Accounting	Business Administration
<b>1</b>	University of Northampton	Great Britain	✓			✓
<b>2</b>	University of Sannio	Italy			✓	
<b>3</b>	University of International Studies of Rome – UNINT	Italy			✓	✓
<b>4</b>	ESC Troyes	France		✓		

*Source: Authors' own study*

In all the cases the programme requirements which students have to meet at their home university before they are allowed to transfer and to continue their studies at a partner university are strictly defined. Considering the bachelor's degree level, students are granted such a possibility after their second year of studies; considering the master's degree level, the minimum is defined at 30 ECTS points which are obtained after the first semester of the second year of studies. At the same time, it is necessary for students who apply for a diploma of a partner university, to successfully complete two semesters of study courses at a partner university, at the total minimal number of points equivalent to 60 ECTS points<sup>31</sup>. The requirements which must be met by students who participate in a double diploma programme must not differ from the requirements which must be met by students of a home university – hence, it involves a necessity of confirming the fact that the teaching outcomes assumed in the programme have been achieved by each individual student.

In the management system of education quality the establishment of an authority for the programme management is taken into consideration. It can be a Coordination Committee, as it is in the case of the cooperation between WSB University in Gdańsk and the University of Sannio, separate authorities of the cooperating universities, as it is in the case of ESC Troyes and UNINT, or a joint programme management board, as it is in the case of the cooperation with the British university. The process of evaluation refers to grades obtained for the particular modules of the study programmes, verification of the quality of submitted diploma theses, individual anonymous evaluation of courses. Committee also assesses whether the content of the courses complies with the objectives set in the program<sup>32</sup>. The next stage of the programme evaluation also assumes the consideration of such an element as the time to get the first employment and career performance.

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<sup>31</sup> In the English higher education system ECTS points are equivalent to CATS points (the multiplier 2).

<sup>32</sup> A system for evaluation and accreditation of the Degree according to the recommendations of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in the 'Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area' approved in Bergen in 2005.

An important element of the management system of education quality for each study programme is the cyclical character of the procedures which are specified for the implementation. Considering cooperation in the field of a double diploma, it is most common to hold annual meetings of programme coordination committees. The validation involves two stages: internal and external. The internal evaluation includes the analysis of the data collected by the particular universities, the design of any possible modifications for the subsequent edition of the programme. The external evaluation includes the analysis of the data collected by the particular universities, suggestions for the improvement of processes and assessment of the structure programme, its content and any other operational issues.

### **Cooperation in the model of education quality monitoring (Quality Assurance Cooperation)**

International academic cooperation may take various formal and organisational forms. It does not have to be the formula of a double diploma. Where there is a will but – for various reasons - no possibilities to establish any cooperation in the form of an agreement on a double diploma, there is another solution to be applied which guarantees international cooperation along with all benefits resulting from the field of know-how management programmes. Graduates from such a programme do not receive two separate diplomas certifying the completion of the study courses at the particular level and any diploma of study graduation signed by the representatives of the partner universities. WSB University in Gdańsk in cooperation with NBS have developed a formula which confirms the assurance of education quality by the British partner, and a relevant diploma of education quality is signed by the authorities of the partner universities.

Considering cooperation in the field of education quality, WSB University in Gdańsk has committed to introduce an external examiner to the system. The external examiner shall provide an annual validation of the MBA programme. The British partner's role is to monitor the evaluation process of the MBA WSB programme in terms of its honest assessment and compliance with



academic standards. External examiners shall become familiar with and shall evaluate a specified number of project assignments and diploma theses during a particular academic year. As a result of such an evaluation, an expert report shall be provided by an external examiner and submitted to the Coordination Committee of the MBA programme and to the university which is the Party responsible for the assurance of education quality, according to the agreement.

The guarantor of the education quality, that is the British University, provides consultation and experience in the field referring to development of programmes and modules, periodical review of the MBA WSB programme, development of academic staff, pedagogical techniques and interactive teaching, academic means and marketing. At the preparatory stage of the first edition of the study courses, the quality guarantor-partner provides WSB University in Gdańsk with consulting services in the field of the programme development and support in the field of evaluation of the MBA WSB programme, description of the study courses and methods of assessment. Considering support in the field of quality assurance, it is also assumed that there shall be development visits organised for the teaching staff who participate in the implementation of the study programme, with guidelines and advice on preparation, implementation and evaluation of the MBA study programme.

In the cooperation between WSB and NBS, the joint management board of the MBA programme holds extensive power to, among others, supervise the MBA programme in the field of administrative and academic matters, to currently evaluate the profile of the programme for the WSB Faculty Councils, to approve the teaching staff for the MBA study courses, to provide current suggestions referring to the recruitment, qualifications and procedures of the enrollment at the MBA programme, to provide periodical evaluation of the MBA programme content and recommendations in the field of programme modifications, based on the surveys carried out among students and teachers upon its own initiative, to select external examiners and to provide suggestions referring to any changes in tuition fees, other charges, etc.

## **Benefits resulting from the implementation of international education**

Polish universities have not paid any particular attention to internationalisation of education for quite a long time, hence the lowest internationalisation rate obtained among the EU and OECD countries does not come as a surprise. So far, the authorities of numerous universities, academic staff members and students have been convinced that there is no need for international accreditations as home accreditations are quite sufficient. Nevertheless, international accreditations turn out to be an element which enhances the system of education quality and distinguishes it in the education market. This, in turn, paves the way to reach global rankings.

Basic benefits resulting from the implementation of education programmes based on international cooperation (in the form of joint education and on the formula of a double diploma) may be obtained by universities, students/graduates and employers. A list of benefits for the particular stakeholders is presented below.

Universities as beneficiaries:

- increased attractiveness of particular universities (including their education offers);
- establishment and reinforcement of mutual contacts;
- internationalisation (of teaching and scientific processes);
- potential diversification of revenue sources;
- professional development of teaching and scientific staff;
- development of teaching methodology and interactive teaching;
- academic and organisational development;
- know-how exchange;
- significance of the internationalisation attribute for the position taken in national and international rankings;
- Students and graduates as beneficiaries;
- completion of a full cycle of education at two universities without any necessity to prolong the time of the studies;

- students' trust towards the higher quality of the programme, considering the fact that there are at least two various institutions which develop and supervise the education programme;
- financial benefits – obtaining two diplomas for the price of one;
- benefits resulting from reduced workload – obtaining two separate diplomas after the completion of two full separate education programmes would be much longer, and it would require increased workload;
- enhanced employability prospects and career path – graduates from the programme have easily found their position in the international labour market; this fact has been undoubtedly affected by international experience acquired during the studies;
- the sense of exclusiveness which distinguishes graduates in the labour market as it results from the completion of one's education cycle at two universities in two different countries;
- Employers as beneficiaries:
- acquisition of employees who are experienced in the functioning in the environment of a particular country;
- employees with international experience often hold well-developed competences in cross-cultural and interpersonal communication;
- being familiar with the reality of a foreign country comes as an additional asset, and it forms an open attitude towards further development.

The essence of the above-mentioned benefits for the particular stakeholders in the process of internationalisation of education undoubtedly refers to many more aspects. Apart from an unquestionable distinguishing feature in the higher education market and from benefits for graduates of international programmes, we can observe better adjustment to the globalizing world.

### **Final remarks**

Internationalisation of education has already become a fact, and it comes as the sine qua non condition of modern education for the current and future labour market. Various models applied

for the implementation of international education by Polish universities may be also implemented in any formula accepted in the world, such as: a joint, double or multiple diploma, cooperation oriented towards external validation of education quality by a foreign partner, which comes as a measurable model of international cooperation where good practice is transferred into the national education system, with benefits for all the key stakeholders involved in the process.