

## **General Guidelines for Offering Undergraduate Double Degree Programmes with Non-local Institutions**

Notes :

1. This set of guidelines applies to collaboration involving learning experiences in a non-local institution of one academic year or more.
2. This set of guidelines apply to a collaborative programme involving awards of two bachelor's degrees, regardless of its being termed a "double" or "dual" degree programme.

### **1. Partner Institution**

In accordance with the UGC's *Interim Guidelines on Offshore Teaching and Learning Activities (UGC Offshore Guidelines)*, the teaching and learning provided by the partner institution should be quality-assured in the home country and any double degree awarded by the partner institution is duly recognised in the home country. The University takes the view that the reputation of institutions is one of the crucial factors to be considered in the selection of partners. As such, a rigorous assessment of the suitability of a potential partner institution should be conducted to evaluate if the institution attains compatible quality and international repute.

### **2. Approval of Agreement on Collaboration**

- 2.1 Regulations and Procedures Governing Undertakings to be Signed by Staff on Behalf of Lingnan University placed on the webpage of the Office of Council/Court Business and General Administration (available via <https://www.ln.edu.hk/occbga/policies-and-guidelines>) provide relevant details about the contents of a written agreement (such as in the form of memorandum of understanding) and approval procedures.
- 2.2 Starting time and duration of collaboration and size of enrolment, e.g. enrolment from Term 1 of 20xx-xx academic year, for xx intakes, with an annual intake target of xx students (respectively by Lingnan and the partner institution, if applicable), have to be specified.

### **3. Programme Proposal and Approval**

- 3.1 For a newly designed double degree programme (paragraph 6.1a) below refers), the proposal shall go through procedures as a new undergraduate programme detailed in Chapter 1 of the AQA Manual. Details about the contents of an initial programme proposal and a full programme proposal for a double degree programme are respectively given in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.
- 3.2 For a double degree programme that awards a degree of an existing Lingnan undergraduate programme by transferring credits of recognised courses obtained in the partner institution (paragraph 6.1b) below refers), the full programme proposal containing details of the double degree programme (contents of which given in Appendix 2) shall be endorsed by the relevant Department Board/Programme and Curriculum

Committee and the Faculty Board before it is submitted to the AQAC for endorsement which will submit the endorsed proposal to the Senate for approval.

- 3.3 If any extra resources are required or there are any resource implications, a proposal with relevant details should be submitted to the University Administrative and Planning Committee (UAPC) for approval.

#### **4. Admission and Language Requirements**

- 4.1 Students shall meet the academic and language requirements of both institutions upon admission.
- 4.2 Each local Lingnan student should be counted as one full-time equivalent regardless of whether the study years are spent in or outside Hong Kong.
- 4.3 All non-local Lingnan students should be admitted through over-enrolment (subject to the university-wide non-local student quota) and will be counted towards the university-wide non-local student quota regardless of the admission route (i.e. regardless of whether the student is admitted by Lingnan or through the partner institution).

#### **5. Programme Structure Under Collaboration**

- 5.1 According to the benchmarking information collected, two common models of double degree programmes adopted by sister institutions are:
  - a) 2 + 2 (i.e. first 2 years in Lingnan plus last 2 years in the partner institution) and;
  - b) 1+2+1 (i.e. the first year in Lingnan plus the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years in the partner institution plus the final year in Lingnan)
- 5.2 An academic unit shall gather relevant benchmarking information as reference for discussion with the partner institution and determination of the proper arrangement.
- 5.3 The proposed arrangement should align with the Academic Regulation of up to 50% of transfer credits and the rule in the *UGC Offshore Guidelines* that at least 50% of the teaching and learning for a funded programme should take place in Hong Kong.

#### **6. Curriculum Design**

- 6.1 There are two approaches in arriving at the curriculum of a double degree programme:
  - a) Designing a new programme that meets requirements of both institutions  
The minimum curriculum requirements for each institution, including courses that make up the curriculum, shall be specified. To meet the requirements of a

bachelor's degree from Lingnan, the curriculum shall include the teaching and learning components following the general curriculum framework (of at least 120 credits as shown below) of an undergraduate programme at Lingnan or courses with equivalent learning hours/units. Any deviation shall be specified in the programme proposal for seeking endorsement of relevant committees and approval of the Senate.

<b>Components</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Core Curriculum	
Common Core	12
Cluster	15
Major Disciplines	48
English Language	12
Chinese Language	6
Free Electives	27
Total:	120

- b) Recognition of course credits to satisfy curriculum requirements of an existing programme at Lingnan

Lingnan and the partner institution should recognise the courses completed by students at the other institution as equivalent to meet the course requirements of their own. The academic unit should propose the equivalency or ways to meet the curriculum requirements for all different categories in the Lingnan programme curriculum with reference to the guidelines on credit transfer set out in Section 7 below. A clear mapping between courses offered by Lingnan and those by the partner institution shall be worked out.

- 6.2 At least 50% of the number of credits for the academic award (i.e. 60 credits for a 120-credit curriculum) should be taken at Lingnan which shall include at least two Common Core courses in the Core Curriculum and not less than half of the credits required for a Major discipline (i.e. 24 credits normally).
- 6.3 Capstone projects, supervised individual research (such as community-based research and Service-Learning projects) and research seminars should be taken at Lingnan as far as possible. Such courses/learning activities could be taken at the partner institution if similar courses/learning activities are available.
- 6.4 When designing the curriculum, attention should be given to the specific rules of taking some courses, including:
- a) sequence/study year of taking Common Core courses (i.e. Students are normally assigned to take CCC8011 and CCC8012 in the first year, and CCC8013 and CCC8014 in the second year);
  - b) sequence/study year of taking English Language Enhancement (ELE) courses

available at <https://www.ln.edu.hk/reg/undergraduate-programmes/english-language-enhancement-ele-curriculum>; and

c) study year of taking capstone courses (which are commonly taken in the final year).

6.5 Consultation should be made with relevant units concerning Core Curriculum, English and Chinese Language courses, e.g. which courses should better be taken at Lingnan, necessary adjustments in study year and course sequencing, etc.

## **7. Guidelines on Recognition of Course Credits**

7.1 The General Guidelines on Course Exemption or Credit Transfer for Undergraduate Programmes (available via <https://www.ln.edu.hk/reg/info/intranet/cetup>) spell out details of the recognition of credits by completing courses in another institution. The recognised courses should be at comparable standard and of equivalency in terms of learning outcomes, contents, etc. Some important provisions are given below for easy reference while more details are given in the Guidelines on Course Exemption or Credit Transfer for Undergraduate Programmes.

7.2 The following aspects should be considered for recognition of a course completed at the partner institution:

- a) level of the course should be at a comparable level;
- b) course content and contact hours should cover substantial portion of the content of a course in an undergraduate programme at Lingnan;
- c) learning outcomes should be largely comparable to the learning outcomes of a course in an undergraduate programme at Lingnan; and
- d) the course should be taken within a number of years set by the academic unit concerned.

7.3 In case the course is at a comparable level, at least 60% (or a higher percentage as set by the academic unit concerned) similar to a course at Lingnan, and was taken within the number of years set by the academic unit concerned, the course will be considered as a similar course being offered by the University. Credit transfer will be granted provided that the grade obtained is grade C or above.

7.4 If the course is NOT considered as similar to a course at Lingnan,

- a) but the course falls in the Major discipline(s) of the student, the student may be exempted from taking a course in the Major discipline(s) and granted with equivalent credits; or
- b) the course can still be recognised for credit transfer as a free elective or a Core Curriculum course if deemed appropriate.

7.5 Considering that the number of credits and the course content of a course completed at the partner institution may be smaller or lighter in comparison with a course at Lingnan (e.g. courses offered by institutions on the Chinese Mainland may bear one or two credits only), flexibility is allowed for combining two courses for credit transfer or course exemption purpose.

## **8. Rules and Regulations**

8.1 Generally, it is expected that students of the programme are required to observe the rules and regulations of both institutions. In principle, Lingnan's regulations and guidelines for examination and assessment shall apply to the courses in the curriculum offered by the University, while those of the partner institution will apply to courses it offers, viz. courses will follow regulations and guidelines of the respective offering institutions. Any deviations and additional requirements shall be proposed for seeking approval.

8.2 The regulations for continuing on and discontinuing from the programme shall be agreed upon among the institutions, taking into account relevant regulations in both institutions.

## **9. Graduation and Academic Awards**

9.1 Students should meet all of the graduation requirements (academic, language, co-curricular and other) of each of the institutions before they can be awarded the degree by the respective institutions.

9.2 The details for arriving at or calculating the overall score/GPA for classification of award, including the processes and indicative timeline, etc. should be agreed upon among the institutions. It is important that the processes are timely and will not lead to postponement of students' graduation.

9.3 Separate graduation certificates from Lingnan and the partner institution will be awarded to students who have satisfied the curricular and graduation requirements of respective institutions.

9.4 Students taking a double degree programme should be subject to the same graduation requirements as those taking an undergraduate programme at Lingnan, including the Service-Learning, the Integrated Learning Programme (ILP), the Information Technology Fluency Test and English language graduation requirements (IELTS and Password test), except otherwise approved. The academic unit may propose adjustments, e.g. reduced number of units required for ILP in consultation with the Office of Student Affairs.

## **10. Financial Arrangements and Fee Payment**

- 10.1 The financial arrangements associated with the proposed collaborative programme must be clearly defined. For instance, students remit their current tuition and other mandatory fees to their respective home institutions, and pay accommodation and any miscellaneous fees, if any, to the host institutions.
- 10.2 Consultation with the Finance Office and approval by relevant committee(s) (e.g. University Administrative and Planning Committee) are required.
- 10.3 Local UGC-funded students should be charged the same tuition fees regardless of whether the study years take place in or outside Hong Kong. If extra fees needed to be paid to the partner institution, these should be borne by Lingnan for local UGC-funded students to fulfil *UGC Offshore Guidelines*, provided that UGC funds are only used to pay for additional cost of teaching local Hong Kong students studying in non-local institutions. As regards non-local students, Lingnan should recover the additional cost of the education services provided to them either through charging higher tuition fees or through payment received from the partner institution.
- 10.4 For a programme of more than 4 years in duration, the year(s) beyond the first 4 years should be run on a self-financing basis.
- 10.5 Support and facilities available to students should be agreed upon as far as possible, e.g. students can enjoy the same level of support and facilities as other students in the two institutions.

## **Content of an Initial Programme Proposal for a Newly-designed Double Degree Programme (for securing approval of Lingnan University)**

This document should normally contain the following information:

1. General information – the title of the programme, normal duration of the programme, QF level of the programme, qualification to be awarded by Lingnan and the partner institution, source of funding (UGC-funded or self-financed and/or relevant overall statement/principle), and the likely commencement date.
2. Partner institution and Faculty(ies)/Department(s) of both institutions responsible for the programme.
3. Need for the programme – this section should establish the need for the programme by industry, commerce and the community. It should contain the results of a detailed investigation obtained from surveys, Government projections for manpower requirements, employment projections, graduate employment etc., taking into account the existing and proposed provision of similarly qualified personnel from other institutions. Evidence of student demand should be supplied. In particular, it should highlight the background and justification for offering a double degree programme and the uniqueness of the proposed programme.
4. Aims and philosophy of the programme – relating the need for the programme to its proposed educational objectives.
5. Admission requirements of both Lingnan and the partner institution.
6. The programme structure under collaboration and other relevant arrangements, such as the period of study in each institution, courses and other teaching and learning components (if any) in the programme, mutual recognition of course credits, etc.
7. Outline of programme content – the courses (a few lines of description), the teaching pattern, the total hours of lectures, tutorials, laboratory sessions etc. per term, and the departments responsible for teaching in each institution.
8. Duration of collaboration and planned student numbers of each institution from start to steady-state.
9. Funding and Resources – give details about source of funding and funding arrangements as agreed with the partner institution, and an estimate of the resources required from the year of development; staff (academic, technician and general), specialist and general teaching accommodation, equipment, general expenses and student accommodation (if any). The impact of the proposal on central services units such as the Library and Information Technology Services Centre should also be identified. For a self-financed programme, a 3-year budget plan shall be prepared and vetted by the Finance Office, as stipulated in the Guidelines for Self-financed Programmes/Activities.
10. The likely staff development needs.
11. Views of the Advisory Board(s), if any.

12. An overall statement about quality assurance mechanism (joint and for individual institutions) and proposed membership of Programme Planning Committee.
13. Projected involvement of other departments, if any.
14. The relationship of this programme to other programmes.
15. Evidence of preliminary peer group evaluation, including comments from individual(s) external to the host department(s).



## **Content of a Full Submission for a Double Degree Programme (for securing approval of Lingnan University)**

Note: Variations in content, sequence or volume may be necessary to reflect the circumstances of a particular programme.

### **Part I : General Information**

#### **1. Introduction**

Title of the programme (in both English and Chinese), normal duration, QF level, qualification to be awarded by Lingnan and the partner institution, source of funding (UGC-funded or self-financed and/or relevant overall statement/principle), and proposed starting date.

#### **2. Partner Institution and Host and Contributing Departments**

Name and information of the partner institution showing its suitability for offering the programme, including assurance that its programmes are quality-assured and its degree awards are duly recognised in the home country.

Faculty(ies)/Department(s) hosting the programme and contributing to the teaching of the programme respectively in Lingnan and the partner institution, with approximate percentage contribution by the two institutions.

#### **3. Justification for the Programme**

Evidence and analysis of the economic and social needs for the programme, background and justification for offering a double degree programme by the two institutions.

#### **4. Duration of Collaboration and Student Number**

The duration of collaboration, proposed initial intake of the programme including the target intake by each of the two institutions, should be shown, together with the pattern of build-up of student numbers over the first five years of the programme.

Some details of planned strategies for student recruitment.

#### **5. Admission Requirements**

A complete statement of minimum admission requirements, with any special conditions for direct entry to higher years of the programme and for exemptions. The requirements shall include the academic, language and other requirements of both institutions.

#### **6. Aims and Learning Outcomes of the Programme**

The educational and relevant aims and intended learning outcomes of the programme, expressed, as appropriate, to reflect knowledge, attitude and skills (e.g. analytical and communication skills), the intellectual and imaginative development of the student. Particular emphasis be placed on what students are expected to learn. Illustrate briefly the mapping between the learning outcomes of the programme and Lingnan's Ideal Graduate Attributes,

to show how the programme contributes to the achievement of some or all of Lingnan's Ideal Graduate Attributes.

#### **7. Level of Award (Applicable to a newly designed programme only)**

Arguments and justification for the level of the award (e.g. Degree vs Honours Degree). Include also a mapping between the learning outcomes of the programme and the relevant Generic Level Descriptors (GLDs) of the HKQF. For relevant GLDs for HKQF Level 5 and the template to be completed, please refer to Annexes 1 and 2 in Chapter 1 of the AQA Manual respectively.

#### **8. Consistency between Programme Standards and those Articulated for the University (Applicable to a newly designed programme only)**

A statement on how the programme standards are consistent with those articulated for the University. The overarching statement of the University about its academic standards is given in Annex 3 in Chapter 1 of the AQA Manual.

#### **9. Programme Design and Structure under Collaborative Arrangements**

The period of study in each institution, such as first two years in Lingnan plus last 2 years in the partner institution (2+2 model) or the first year in Lingnan plus the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years in partner institution plus the final year in Lingnan (1+2+1 model). Justifications in support of the proposed pattern, such as benchmarking results, are required. Whether students can join exchange programmes should be stated.

For an existing programme at Lingnan proposing mutual recognition of course credits with the partner institution: Details of course equivalency or ways to meet the curriculum requirements for all different categories in the Lingnan programme curriculum with reference to Lingnan's guidelines on credit transfer. A clear mapping between courses offered by Lingnan and the partner institution shall be provided.

For a newly-designed programme: Design philosophy and academic structure of the programme in detail, including the teaching institution(s) (and department(s), if possible) of each course. The inter-relationships between courses should be identified and any streaming of the programme clearly presented. How the components in the programme align with the programme aims and will lead to achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes. In a programme where the student is given a substantial degree of choice, the permitted programmes of study should be identified with a clear indication of compulsory courses and with regulations for the choice of majors and elective courses. The conditions for the award in terms of credit accumulation should be defined, and typical programmes of study or routes through the programme scheme should be given.

#### **10. Programme Curriculum**

The curriculum should be specified in terms of the detailed teaching pattern for each of the courses offered. This should include the courses and activities in each year of the programme, the time allocated to each course in terms of lectures, tutorials, workshops, syndicates, etc., and each activity together with the planned teaching group size.

## **11. Programme Operation, Management, Quality Assurance and Enhancement**

A general description of programme operation, management, quality assurance and enhancement at each institution that will apply to the programme and any joint quality assurance mechanism, such as joint programme committee, programme committee/board(s) or other committee(s) at individual institutions that are responsible for programme management, quality assurance and enhancement. Name (if available) and responsibilities of the Programme Director/Department Head, etc. If deemed necessary, other programme responsibilities – admission/year/major tutors, course coordinators, etc. There should be clear delineation of roles and responsibilities of each institution.

There should be a statement about the requirement for students of the programme to observe the rules and regulations of both institutions. Any deviations or exceptions shall be stated.

Information with regard to the future review of the programme via the conduct of benchmarking including names of institutions selected for benchmarking, reasons for the selection, aspects to be benchmarked (mainly on teaching and learning related matters), intended goals to be achieved and indicative timeline for conducting the benchmarking exercise can be provided at the programme proposal stage or within the first year after launch of the programme.

What measures will be taken to achieve the intended learning outcomes and evidence will be gathered to determine whether the intended learning outcomes of the programme and/or individual courses are achieved, such as collection and handling of results of Course Teaching and Learning Evaluation, views and suggestions from External Academic Advisers, Advisory Board and Staff-Student Consultation Committee, graduates survey, alumni survey, employers survey, results of benchmarking activities, etc.

## **12. Teaching/Learning Methods and Projects (if any)**

For a newly-designed programme, include the following items:

General description of the teaching and learning methods/activities including balance of and rationale for the proposed teaching/learning methods/activities.

Project work should be explained in detail, typical examples given and the proposed organisation and assessment methods described.

How the teaching and learning methods/activities will contribute to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

For an existing programme, any changes to the teaching/learning and consequential impact arising from the collaboration should be included. In addition, some description of the teaching and learning methods/activities in the partner institution should preferably be included.

## **13. Assessment and Progression**

For a newly-designed programme, include the following: What are the general strategy and methods in assessing students for the programme. How the assessment methods serve to measure the learning outcomes of the overall programme and individual courses. There may be some highlights or examples on assessment methods specifically for certain courses to be used to measure certain learning outcomes.

A brief description of examination and assessment regulations and guidelines that will apply to courses in the curriculum should be stated, e.g. courses will follow regulations and guidelines of respective offering institutions. Relevant arrangements, including processes and indicative timeline in transferring credits and course results are to be stated. Any deviations from and additional requirements to Lingnan's regulations have to be spelt out.

The regulations for continuing on and discontinuing from the programme should also be stated.

#### **14. Graduation and Academic Award**

Requirements for graduation (academic, language, co-curricular and other), the degree award of each of the institutions, details for arriving at or calculating the overall score/GPA\* for classification of award, including relevant processes and indicative timeline, etc. should be stated. It is important that the processes are timely and will not lead to postponement of students' graduation.

\*Details on whether credits and grades of courses completed in the partner institution or those recognised for credit transfer would be included in the overall score/GPA calculation, and if yes, relevant rationale and method for the arrangements, including such details as grade conversion.

It should be stated that separate graduation certificates from Lingnan and the partner institution will be awarded to students who satisfied the graduation requirements of respective institutions.

If a student is allowed to opt out from the double degree programme during the course of study and transfer to another study programme offered by one of the two institutions, relevant details including the application procedures and approving authorities should be given.

#### **15. Relevant Current Programmes of the Hosting Departments of Lingnan (Applicable to a newly designed programme only)**

List those programmes that are relevant to the programme being proposed, if any, and their current intake numbers.

#### **16. Professional Recognition (if applicable)**

Indicate the local and/or overseas relevant professional bodies the institution(s) has contacted or going to contact for seeking recognition, and the likelihood that the programme can satisfy requirement/criteria for recognition/exemption.

#### **17. Resource Support for the Programme from Each Institution**

For a newly designed programme, state the resources which will be used to support the programme by both institutions according to the headings (a) to (h) below, with flexibility on details to be provided under each heading. For an existing programme, indicate any changes to resource support and consequential impact arising from the collaboration. In addition, some description of the resource support in the partner institution should preferably be included. A statement should be included specifying the student-staff ratio (SSR). A distinction should be made between those resources in place, and those still to be obtained.

- (a) *Academic Staff*
  - i) Listing of academic staff who will be involved in the programme/major(s), with rank, qualifications, experience/posts held, research expertise, and teaching and/or other programme responsibilities; and
  - ii) rank and subject area of additional posts, those previously agreed and any now requested, with justifications, if any.
- (b) *Other Staff Support*  
Present establishment and rank of administrative, technical and general staff who will support the programme/major(s).
- (c) *Accommodation*
  - i) Tabulation of the host departments' accommodation including staff rooms and specialised areas;
  - ii) additional demands on general teaching accommodation created by the programme/major(s); and
  - iii) any essential, new specialist accommodation required by the programme/major, as previously agreed or now requested.
- (d) *Equipment*
  - i) List of major equipment items available to support the programme/major(s); and
  - ii) additional major equipment items needed, as previously agreed or now requested.
- (e) *General Expenses*
  - i) List of departmental allocations for general expenses and equipment maintenance in current and previous two years; and
  - ii) any increase in the recurrent level of general expenses needed to support the programme/major(s), as previously agreed or now requested.
- (f) *Library Support*
  - i) List of books/journals/periodicals relevant to the programme/major(s) currently held by the Library; and
  - ii) additional library expenditure needed to support the programme/major(s), both initial and recurrent, as previously agreed or now requested.
- (g) *Computing Support*
  - i) List of computing facilities, software, etc. available to the programme/major(s); and
  - ii) any additional computing expenditure required, as previously agreed or now requested.
- (h) *Other Support Facilities*
  - i) Other facilities which will directly support the programme/major(s); and
  - ii) any additional facilities needed for the programme/major(s), and their cost, as previously agreed or now requested.

## **18. Student Accommodation and Support**

Include hostel or other accommodation to be provided to students including fees chargeable and other details.

Include a brief description about support and facilities available to students, e.g. students can enjoy the same level of support and facilities as other students in the two institutions.

## **19. Funding, Fees and Budget**

Include all fees (tuition fees and others) charged for the programme and the financial arrangements between the University and the partner institution. Indicate clearly the funding source (UGC-funded or self-financed) for students (local vs non-local students).

Include a budget showing annual incomes and expenses of the proposed programme, if possible.

[Note: For a programme of more than 4 years in duration, the year(s) beyond the first 4 years should be on a self-financing basis.]

## **Part II : Syllabuses**

A syllabus should be provided for each course contained in the programme scheme. For courses offered by Lingnan, the syllabuses should follow the standard format shown in Annex 4 of Chapter 1 of the AQA Manual. Two standard syllabus templates illustrating two forms of presentation for the Measurement of Learning Outcomes section are shown in Annex 5 and Annex 6 of Chapter 1. An interactive Course Syllabus Generation Tool is available at <http://tlc.ln.edu.hk/SyllabusTool/> which provides step by step guidelines to develop course syllabus meeting the standard format. For courses offered by the partner institution, the course syllabus shall contain most, if not all, of the items required in Lingnan's standard format.