

**Guidelines for Building International Joint Diploma Programs  
Including Double and Joint Degree Programs**

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**Central Council for Education  
Working Group on the Internationalization of Universities,  
Japan**

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\*The English text is for reference and the text in the Japanese language shall be the authentic text.

## Chapter 1 Overview

With the trend of globalization in various fields, cross-border mobility of students and academic staff in higher education has been growing at an accelerated pace, and universities are beginning to work actively on various joint educational programs. Japan, too, must improve its international compatibility of educational systems to meet global ones and ultimately enhance its international competitiveness from the standpoints of developing education, research, and human resources that can proactively contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world. To this end, Japan has, on the initiative of the Central Council for Education, discussed the necessity of an attractive mechanism enabling Japanese universities to create joint programs and confer academic degrees jointly with universities in foreign countries with appropriate quality assurance of the degrees conferred and programs offered, so that Japanese universities can successfully host competent overseas students and more capable, motivated young Japanese students can study abroad.

Based on this understanding, a new scheme was put into effect under the Japanese legal system to allow Japanese universities (including junior colleges: the same shall apply hereinafter) to organize academic programs with foreign universities jointly (hereinafter referred to as "International Cooperative Curricula (ICC) Scheme") to confer joint degrees (hereinafter referred to as "JD"). The Guidelines have been formulated to be used by universities in Japan as a reference when they build their international joint diploma programs, including JD programs.

### **1. Objectives**

The Guidelines have been formulated in light of "University Education and Global Human Resource Development for the Future" (third proposal) published on May 28, 2013, by the Education Rebuilding Implementation Council. The objectives are, in corresponding to the globalization of university education, to facilitate organized and continuous cooperation, including double degree (hereinafter referred to as "DD") and JD between universities in Japan and those in foreign countries, ensure the quality of degrees conferred and programs offered under these programs, and ultimately ensure and improve the quality of higher education in Japan and abroad.

The Guidelines have no legally binding effect but present points of attention which universities should refer to when designing actual JD and other programs under the scheme, and also serve as basic materials when the viewpoints of program development are examined by government. Universities and other parties concerned are expected to take the Guidelines into full consideration.

### **2. Basic Principles**

There is no clear and detailed international agreement on how universities in different countries should develop cooperative programs, and this fact partly causes difficulties for

universities to advance discussion for program design. On the other hand, universities in a number of countries and regions are also taking steps, including the development of DD, JD and other cooperative programs with foreign universities while boosting student mobility.

In such circumstances, the development of JD, DD and other cooperative programs, as well as organized and continuous educational partnerships, between universities in Japan and foreign countries will enable the former to offer wider educational opportunities, give Japanese students opportunities to experience different cultures, and contribute to closer regional cooperation. Such educational cooperation, particularly with Asian higher education institutions, will not just vitalize exchanges in higher education based on geographical advantages, but also enable us to build mutually-beneficial relations through joint educational programs and greatly contribute to regional peace and prosperity.

JD particularly matches the period background of this global era because it enables universities to take advantage of the educational resources of other universities and provide students with advanced programs that a single university cannot offer, and to take a step forward from the stage of singly conferring academic degrees to the stage of jointly conferring academic degrees as an "integrated cross-border entity." Universities are expected to actively commit themselves to such an organized and continuous international educational cooperation while continuing to respect their own traditions and principles as well as developing its uniqueness.

Universities are expected to clearly be aware of international reputation and recognition, to ensure the quality of education and determine which of JD or DD to introduce.

The Guidelines shall have no impact whatsoever on any academic degree system in a foreign country.

Universities in Japan are required to take into account relevant laws and regulations of the countries in which partner universities are located, as well as their JD schemes, and develop academic programs that do not conflict with the Standards for the Establishment of Universities (Ordinance No. 28 of the Ministry of Education, 1956), and other laws and regulations related to the university system of Japan. This will affect the credibility of Japan's universities and degree systems. Moreover, to ensure the quality of programs, universities should of course avoid any circumstances in which they fail to offer education that ought to be provided under the programs they have developed as a matter of course.

### **3. Significance**

JD and DD each may have a different significance to different universities, but widely enable any Japanese universities to offer more advanced and innovative, or more attractive, academic programs that cannot be offered by a single university. This will make it possible for students to gain more quality and value-added learning opportunities, and eventually for universities, governments, companies and local communities to acquire excellent and motivated human resources.

- ◇ Significance to students
  - (i) Gaining advanced and value-added learning opportunities that could not be gained at a single university
  - (ii) Demonstrating their predominance as a result of completing educational programs provided jointly by higher educational institutions in more than one country
  - (iii) Developing careers that are globally valued in the labor market and academic career
  - (iv) Acquiring degrees in the names of more than one university in a shorter period of time possibly at a lower cost
  
- ◇ Significance to universities
  - (i) Strengthening and improving their presence abroad
  - (ii) Presenting study-abroad degree programs whose quality they can guarantee
  - (iii) Improving international competitiveness and attractiveness by making curricula more fulfilling through educational cooperation with universities in foreign countries
  - (iv) Developing human resources with international perspective by systematically hosting and sending out excellent students
  - (v) Changing mindset of academic staff through deepened cooperation with universities in foreign countries and creating opportunities for various reforms on campus ,including the enhancement of international academic cooperation
  
- ◇ Significance to the Government
  - (i) Broadening opportunities for higher education, promoting Japan's higher education abroad and encouraging international exchanges
  - (ii) Contributing to improving international compatibility of Japan's higher education
  - (iii) Creating opportunities to globally harmonize the quality assurance system
  - (iv) Strategically strengthening human security through organized and systematic personnel exchanges
  
- ◇ Significance to society (companies, local communities, etc.)
  - (i) Developing global human resources demanded by society (companies, local communities, etc.)
  - (ii) Easily evaluating the capacity of students who have degrees both from Japanese and foreign universities
  - (iii) Gaining human networks of students completing JD and DD programs in Japanese and foreign universities
  - (iv) Understanding the characteristics of universities and taking advantage of the knowledge for recruitment activities if JD and DD programs become common and grouping of universities is fostered; some universities becoming known for their international education
  - (v) Enabling students to instantly take advantage of their experience of campus life and internship at foreign universities, which they could not gain at a university in Japan

alone, for the international activities of companies and local communities

#### **4. Definitions**

The definitions of the major terms in the Guidelines are as follows.

Terms explained in the Guidelines should be limitedly applied to programs among Japanese and foreign universities as stipulated in Japanese laws and regulations, while not applied to JD among foreign universities.

There exist different terms – not just the “joint degree” and “double degree” as cited here, but also “dual degree” and “multiple degree” – when universities develop academic programs and confer degrees jointly with foreign universities. The definitions of these terms, however, could be covered by definitions of either JD or DD stated in this Guidelines by their nature, so will not be classified specifically as different degrees in the Guidelines. In either case, universities are expected to develop and offer academic courses in line with the cautions of the Guidelines (in other words, the Guidelines shall not preclude universities from using terms other than “joint degree” and “double degree”). It should also be noted that JD, DD and other similar terms are used in different manners both at home and abroad

#### **Joint Degree (JD)**

A single academic degree jointly conferred on students who have completed a single joint educational program established by universities that jointly set up the said program. The latest revisions of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities, and the relevant regulations, will make it possible for Japanese universities to confer "joint degrees" in their names and the names of partner universities in foreign countries on those who have completed prescribed programs. ("Joint degree (JD)" will have the meaning after the revisions from Chapter 2 in the Guidelines.)

#### **Double Degree (DD)**

Academic degrees separately conferred on students who have completed a number of educational programs on the same academic degree level, established by universities under a partnership and satisfied the requirements of each of the universities. Such degrees will be conferred on qualified students by each of the universities.

#### **Diploma**

A document which is awarded to a student who has completed an academic program organized by a university (which satisfies the requirements for graduation set forth by the relevant laws and regulations) and graduated from said university. It certifies the fact that the said university has conferred an academic degree on the student pursuant to provisions of the paragraphs of Article 104 of the School Education Law (Act No. 26 of 1947).

**Certificate**

A document issued to a person (student or non-student) who has completed a special academic program prescribed by a single university or more than one university to certify the fact of completion.

**Program**

A series of academic curricula systematically planned and organized by a single university or more than one university that consists of courses necessary for fulfilling the educational objectives of the university or universities, their faculties and departments, or academic programs themselves. The said university or universities should strictly evaluate whether students have appropriately completed the curricula, and confer relevant degrees on them, or certify the completion of the curricula.

**Curriculum**

A particular system of courses, research supervision and other elements to compose an academic program offered by a single university or more than one university.

**Credit Transfer**

The procedure whereby universities recognize credits that their students have gained at other universities, including foreign universities, as equivalent to those issued by themselves, in accordance with such measures as consultation with those other universities. It will be applicable when universities acknowledge that such credit transfer is beneficial to the said students in light of Article 28 and other relevant articles of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities. Universities are required to have courses necessary to achieve their educational purposes by themselves as premises, and the number of credits transferrable from other universities shall be limited.

## Chapter 2 Outline of the Scheme

### 1. Basic Principles

A JD Program is an academic program whereby Japanese and foreign universities jointly organize curricula and confer an academic degree on a person completing the curricula under the names of the presidents of the universities concerned. The Japanese educational system has long restricted and, in fact, not permitted any JD because it is not appropriate in light of quality assurance to allow foreign universities outside the jurisdiction of Japanese laws to play a part in the conferral of Japanese academic degrees. In this regard, the Japanese educational system continues, even in JD that is newly established as a system in Japanese jurisdiction this time as “International Cooperative Curricula (ICC) Scheme,” to respect the "principle of territoriality of laws" and exclude involvement of foreign universities (universities under the jurisdiction of said foreign countries) from Japan's School Education Law and other laws and regulations. Therefore, pursuant to the School Education Law and other laws and regulations, JD under this Japanese scheme is deemed as "a degree conferred by a Japanese university(ies)" and it allows universities in foreign countries to sign jointly with the Japanese university(ies) on a relevant diploma, while the actual process in reality may differ from legal treatment. With regard to the quality of educational activities of the partner universities in foreign countries, the scheme will make it mandatory for Japanese universities to conclude agreements with partner universities and establish an International Cooperative Department or Major (hereafter “IC-D/M”) to implement ICC. Accordingly, the scheme will examine the contents of such inter-university agreements, mechanisms of quality assurance and other elements of their JD programs in the process of screening for the MEXT approval of establishment of such IC-D/M. After granting an approval, the scheme will assure the quality of the approved JD programs by appropriate evaluations such as certified evaluation and accreditation, and peer reviews. In other words, the Japanese educational system has eased its restrictive stance by establishing a mechanism to secure a certain level of quality of educational activities in foreign universities and this reform of the educational system and changes in its interpretation and application will enable Japanese universities to actively cooperate with foreign universities in this globalized era.

For students at Japanese universities, the credit transfer system is already available, whereby they are allowed, for instance, to acquire up to 60 credits out of the 124 required for graduation from foreign universities in place of credits gained for courses offered by their home universities in the undergraduate level. The difference between the credit transfer system and this latest JD scheme is that the latter will systematically incorporate learning at foreign universities on an ex-ante basis that had been permitted on an individual basis and ex-post facto into the curricula of Japanese universities.



## 2. Mechanism of the Scheme

### (1) Conferral of Degrees

- A JD program is a single academic program organized jointly by Japanese and foreign universities, in which thesis reviews for students who have completed the curricula are jointly implemented and confer jointly a single diploma on each successful student in the names of the presidents of the universities concerned. More than two universities jointly organize one single curriculum and confer a diploma on each student completing the curricula, so the JD program is different from a DD program whereby different universities separately organize their own curricula and independently confer degrees on each student.

The JD program is likely superior to a DD program in terms of time and cost: the JD program allows students to complete a single curricula to acquire a degree, whereas a DD program requires students to complete two or more curricula at universities both in Japan and foreign countries to acquire two or more kinds of academic degrees (although students in DD program may be able to save time and cost with the use of a credit transfer system, to a certain extent).

- As described previously, from the viewpoint of the “principle of territoriality of laws,” it is inappropriate to authorize foreign universities outside the Japan’s jurisdiction to confer degrees based on the School Education Law and other laws and regulations, irrespective of the nature of JD programs. (Pursuant to the provisions of Article 104 of the School Education law, only Japanese universities and the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (hereinafter referred to as the "NIAD-UE") may confer academic degrees in Japan.) Therefore, in the JD scheme this time, students completing any ICC will be granted Japanese degrees from Japanese universities pursuant to the School Education Law and other laws and regulations.
- In this regard, the Rules for Degrees (Ordinance No. 9 of the Ministry of Education, 1953) comprise an ordinance that prescribes that only Japanese universities and NIAD-UE have the right to confer academic degrees in Japan. The Rules (Article 10-2) prescribe that Japanese universities may jointly confer academic degrees under the Domestic Cooperative Curricula (hereafter “DCC”) Scheme similar to the JD scheme in the names of the presidents of a number of the Japanese universities jointly organizing the curricula concerned. This, however, is feasible simply because universities jointly organizing curricula are all institutions authorized to confer Japanese academic degrees.

The School Education Law, on the other hand, does not permit foreign universities outside the jurisdiction of Japanese laws and regulations to confer academic degrees as authorized by Japanese laws and regulations, so it is inappropriate in light of the "principle of higher law" to permit foreign universities to confer Japanese academic degrees under the Rules for Degrees. Therefore, Japanese laws and regulations acknowledge JD under

the latest scheme as degrees from Japanese universities that are authorized to confer Japanese degrees in accordance with the Rules for Degrees. (NB: In relation to this interpretation, no Japanese laws and regulations refuse permission to any foreign universities to confer Japanese academic degrees as long as they are approved as Japanese universities through examination for establishment pursuant to the provisions of the School Education Law and other laws and regulations, and permitted to confer Japanese academic degrees.)

With the recent trend of globalization in higher education, Japan must have a mechanism whereby Japanese universities can actively engage in educational and research activities in collaboration with foreign universities, provided that a certain quality of education and research can be secured. To realize this, the restrictive treatment on conferral of JD was revised and the interpretation and application of the relevant laws and regulations changed. Meanwhile, the content to be written down in diplomas of Japanese universities has been left to the discretion of universities. But now, Notification On Enforcement of the Ordinance to Revise the Standards for the Establishment of Universities and other relevant laws and regulations (November 14, 2014), and other documents, officially permit foreign universities to state their names on the diplomas of Japanese universities for JD programs in which they are involved as long as such JD programs satisfy certain conditions. By necessity, no universities are able to issue JD diploma jointly with their partner foreign universities, if they fail to satisfy such conditions for quality assurance of the JD scheme (establishment and examination of, and approval for an IC-D/M).

- On the basis of a provision in paragraph (4), Article 4 of the School Education Law, the Standards for Changes in Types (bachelor, master, and doctor) and Fields (academic disciplines) of Academic Degrees (Public Notice No. 39 of 2003, MEXT) classify fields of degrees. On the other hand, it should be noted that different fields exist for academic degrees in different countries and such fields do not necessarily match those in Japan, while it is thought that there is a certain commonality among the fields of degrees in line with the need to secure international competence of academic degrees. Thus, education under ICC Scheme shall be interpreted as "changes in the fields of degrees". (NB: Because of this, universities will be unable to take advantage of the existing notification system for establishment, but will be subject to examination and approval when they are establishing an IC-D/M.)
- As stated above, curricula for JD will be jointly organized by a Japanese university and a partner university in a foreign country, and a single diploma will be granted to a person completing the curricula jointly offered by the universities. Thus, the types of degrees for JD by the universities are naturally designed to be identical. (For instance, if a Japanese university wishes to organize JD at the bachelor level, it will cooperate with a foreign university with curricula at the bachelor level to organize JD curricula.)

As for Professional Graduate Schools, however, foreign countries where partner universities are situated do not necessarily have similar systems. Thus, ICC Scheme exceptionally permits graduate schools and Professional Graduate Schools to cooperate with curricula at the equivalent levels so that they can organize JD programs under the scheme. (\* For instance, ‘master (professional)’ and ‘master of education (professional)’ in Japan are eligible for JD not only with degrees corresponding to ‘master (professional)’ and ‘master of education (professional)’, but also other equivalent master degrees in foreign countries. Similarly, ‘master’ in Japan is eligible for JD with ‘master (professional)’ at partner universities, if there are any. In any of these cases, the types of degree conferred by Japanese universities will be those which the said universities are permitted to confer (for instance, professional degrees in the former case and master degrees in the latter case), and the prior consent for this point from their partner graduate schools in foreign countries is needed.

Japanese universities shall consult with MEXT when asked by a foreign university to organize JD for a degree type which has no corresponding type of degree in Japan and when they intend to accept the offer.

## **(2) Mandatory Requirement of Establishment of an IC-D/M**

- When organizing a JD program in this scheme, Japanese universities are required to establish a new IC-D/M under an existing faculty or graduate school as an internal body to operate their ICC. Junior colleges are required to establish a new such department or major under an existing department for the same purpose. The reason being that:
  - a: A JD is a curriculum jointly organized with foreign universities and thus different from existing curricula at faculties or graduate schools. It also requires careful consultation with partner foreign universities for the organization and implementation of the said curricula. Thus it is crucial for Japanese universities to secure an independent operating function in order to flexibly respond to this challenging initiative while gaining the cooperation of the parent faculty/school and other internal bodies; and
  - b: Even if a curriculum is organized with a foreign university, the academic fields of degrees under the university system of the foreign country are not necessarily consistent with those of the Japanese university system. If Japanese universities were permitted to discretionally organize ICC within existing approved departments or majors, the practice for curricula design by the universities could deviate from the authorized scope. Thus, it is appropriate to require universities to establish a new department or major when they organize ICC.
- JD programs consist of educational and research activities in collaboration with foreign universities. It is important to take advantage of existing educational resources for the successful development of JD program and thus the ICC Scheme requires establishment of a IC-D/M (“International Cooperative Department” or “International Cooperative Major”)

newly under an existing faculty, graduate school or junior college, which is a parent organization, to secure suitable specialty (major) of the JD programs.

The ICC Scheme prescribes that the maximum number of student enrollment per academic year at an IC-D/M is up to 20% of the total admission capacity of its parent faculty/school so as not to interfere with the smooth educational and research activities' processes of the faculty/school.

The scheme also prescribes that JD programs may use academic staffs, facilities, equipment and other resources of their parent faculties/schools on the condition that JD programs will not interfere with its educational and research activities

Accordingly, the scheme does not assume that any existing parent faculties and graduate schools themselves serve as IC-D/M. It is possible to establish a new faculty or graduate school concurrently when establishing an IC-D/M, but essentially the scheme assumes that MEXT approves establishment of such IC-D/M on the basis of existing faculties/schools to take advantage of the existing academic staff, facilities, equipment and other resources because, in fact, a number of international cooperative programs worldwide targets a small number of students.

### **(3) International Cooperative Curricula (ICC)**

- Paragraph (1), Article 19, of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities and other relevant laws and regulations prescribe that “a university shall establish the courses necessary to achieve its educational purpose.” With respect to the curriculum design of JD programs, however, the standards prescribe special provisions, whereby Japanese universities may exceptionally organize single curricula jointly with one or more universities in foreign countries (ICC) in the same manner as DCC Scheme. On the other hand, it is indispensable that Japanese universities that establish ICC take responsibility for organizing systematic educational curricula and not assign its responsibility in whole or in part to foreign partner universities. To this end, Japanese universities shall consult with partner universities in foreign countries and conclude inter-university agreements as the Items to Consult on with Partner Universities in Foreign Countries to Organize and Implement International Cooperative Curricula (Public Notice No. 168 of 2014, MEXT) on the organization of international cooperative curricula stipulates the curriculum design as an item for consultation.

(Note) Paragraph (1), Article 19 of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities requires Japanese universities to have a certain amount of educational resources (necessary faculty organizations, facilities and equipment) and to establish their own courses (courses for credits that are specified as graduation requirements by each university) necessary to achieve their educational purposes in accordance with their own supervisory plans. In connection with this, the educational system of Japan provides a mechanism whereby universities may allow their undergraduate students to acquire a maximum of 60 credits at foreign universities or elsewhere other than at their own universities. But this arrangement simply treats credits obtained by students at foreign universities as if they were obtained at

the students' universities by using the concept of credit transfer, and Japanese universities are still required to "establish necessary courses themselves" and are not permitted to organize curricula without a complete set of necessary courses, assuming that students have already received or will obtain a certain number of credits at foreign universities or elsewhere.

Exceptionally, however, paragraph (2), Article 13 of the Standards for Establishment of Graduate Schools permits graduate schools to commission out research supervision of their graduate students to test laboratories and research institutes equipped with advanced research standards, facilities, equipment and human resources (the length of the commission is one year for master's degree programs and a full year for doctoral programs). (This scheme is widely used as an educational and research tool by graduate schools in cooperation with other institutes.)

- JD programs may enable students in Japan to have access to courses that partner universities in foreign countries can offer, but which Japanese universities cannot. Such programs are also expected to enable Japanese universities to offer new academic programs that they could not create alone or in collaboration with other Japanese universities. For this purpose, a special provision has been set out to allow Japanese universities to deem in advance courses offered by foreign partner universities as courses offered by themselves. (NB: While conventional credit transfer systems are an arrangement whereby each university in Japan establishes the necessary courses first and then individually grants students the credits of the courses ex-post facto and in accordance with the academic achievements of the students made in other universities, the latest special provision is an arrangement to deem courses offered by foreign universities as those of Japanese universities in advance and systematically as an exception to the foregoing provision that "a university shall establish the courses necessary to achieve its educational purpose".)

The special provision prescribes that credits earned at partner universities in foreign countries (31 credits or more in the case of 4-year undergraduate programs) will be converted to credits of Japanese universities by applying standard learning hours per credit at foreign universities into the Japanese standard (standard learning hours per credit).

Even in this case, as in the DCC Scheme, it is required to set the minimum number of credits that their students shall acquire from each university that jointly organizes the curricula. Specifically, the scheme prescribes that students shall acquire 50% or more of the credits necessary for graduation at Japanese universities and a minimum number of credits essentially equivalent to the minimum number of credits necessary under the DCC Scheme at partner universities in foreign countries (see Table 1).

Table 1: Minimum Required Credits and  
Maximum Credits Acquirable from Courses Jointly Designed

		Credits necessary for graduation	Minimum credits required for JD		Courses Jointly Designed (half of credit transfer)
			Japanese university	Each Partner Foreign university	
University	General	124 credits or more	62 credits or more	31 credits or more	30 credits or fewer
	Medical Science and Dental Science	188 credits or more	94 credits or more	32 credits or more	30 credits or fewer
	Pharmacological Sciences (those whose major purpose is to cultivate practical clinical ability)	186 credits or more	93 credits or more	31 credits or more	30 credits or fewer
	Veterinary Science	182 credits or more	91 credits or more	31 credits or more	30 credits or fewer
Junior College	Two-year Program	62 credits or more	31 credits or more	10 credits or more	15 credits or fewer
	3-year Program	93 credits or more	47 credits or more	20 credits or more	23 credits or fewer
	3-year night Program	62 credits or more	31 credits or more	10 credits or more	15 credits or fewer
Graduate School	General	30 credits or more	15 credits or more	10 credits or more	5 credits or fewer
Professional Graduate School	General	30 credits or more	15 credits or more	10 credits or more	7 credits or fewer
	Graduate school of teacher education	45 credits or more	23 credits or more	7 credits or more	25% or less of 45 credits or more

- In the ICC Scheme, it is likely that Japanese and foreign universities would organize curricula using each other's courses or jointly developing courses, so the scheme has introduced a new concept called "courses jointly designed" (Japanese and foreign universities jointly plan, design, implement, manage courses, as well as managing the academic records of students for quality assurance, and conferring credits) so that students can count credits of courses jointly designed in the number of credits acquired from their universities in Japan or partner universities in foreign countries. (Credits of courses jointly designed will not be included in the minimum number of credits from partner universities in foreign countries, to avoid double counting.)

Japanese universities shall determine the number of learning hours concerning credits of courses jointly designed in consultation with foreign partner universities, ensuring that they provide sufficient learning hours as set forth in all the items of paragraph (2), Article 21 of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities.

- The scheme deems classrooms and other facilities of partner universities in foreign countries participating in ICC to be included in "classrooms, laboratories or their equivalents other than classrooms where universities conduct classes" as prescribed in the Public Notice No. 51 of 2001 of MEXT concerning the "stipulation on the classes that universities allow students to take," pursuant to the provision of paragraph (2), Article 25 of the Standards for Establishment of Universities.

Thus, Japanese universities may conduct classes using various types of media in a highly advanced manner in the classrooms and other locations of their partner universities in foreign countries. (As heretofore, they may conduct classes using various types of media in a highly advanced manner in classrooms and laboratories or their equivalents where universities conduct classes.) In this regard, the provisions of paragraph (5), Article 32, of the Standards for Establishment of Universities and other laws and regulations prescribe that the number of credits earned through classes conducted in this manner will not exceed 60 credits out of the total number of credits necessary for graduation.

On the other hand, the present system already permits students in Japan to take classes that foreign universities conduct with use of various types of media in a highly advanced manner, thus this applies to the case of ICC for partner universities in foreign countries to use various media in their classes. However, the provisions of paragraphs (1) and (2), Article 28, of the Standards for Establishment of Universities has already stipulated that a maximum of 60 credits from classes conducted by foreign universities may be deemed as credits acquired from classes conducted by the students' Japanese universities. Thus, for ICC, special provisions are set out to permit Japanese universities to accept courses of their foreign partner universities as their own courses and distinguish classes that foreign universities conduct with use of various types of media from cases applicable to the provision of the article above (that is, no credits earned upon completion of courses under ICC will be counted in the number of credits referred to in the said article). In this case, according to the provisions of paragraph (5), Article 32, of the Standards for Establishment

of Universities and other laws and regulations, the sum of the credits from classes that foreign universities conduct with use of various types of media in a highly advanced manner and credits from classes that Japanese universities conduct in the same fashion shall not exceed 60 credits.

Notwithstanding the preceding, the provisions prescribed in Section 3, Chapter 3 of the Guidelines should be kept in mind: a main objective of JD programs is to produce greater educational effects by providing students with opportunities to spend a certain period of time at partner universities, to gain valuable learning that is inaccessible at a single university, and to be exposed with international exchanges and different cultures. It would thus be inconsistent with this objective if it became possible for students to complete ICC by only various types of media in a highly advanced manner and other tools, staying at one university or in one country.

#### **(4) Requirements for Completion**

- JDs are conferred on students who have completed curricula organized and implemented jointly by Japanese and foreign universities. To complete JD programs, students are required to satisfy the requirements set forth in the School Education Law and other relevant laws and regulations of Japan, such as duration of study and the number of credits earned, as well as the requirements for completion set forth by partner universities in foreign countries.

With regard to establishment of courses for ICC, while a special provision is set out to permit Japanese universities to accept courses of partner universities in foreign countries as if they were their own courses, universities joining the ICC are still required to take all responsibility for providing the necessary courses. As in the DCC Scheme, the ICC scheme prescribes the minimum necessary number of credits to be taken at each university, so that each university shall provide the necessary courses and shall not be able to leave to partner universities the provision of all courses of JD programs.

Considering that, in this Japanese ICC scheme, the degrees awarded to students completing ICC shall be treated as Japanese degrees by laws, it is required to earn no less than 50% of credits at Japanese universities. The minimum number of credits which shall be earned at partner universities has been determined in reference to the DCC Scheme and is approximately the same as that in the DCC system (the number of minimum credits for undergraduate degree is set as ought to be earned in one academic year, and the number for other types of degrees to be determined according the nature of courses).

In Japan, if a student who holds a master or professional master degree, etc. enters a graduate school to pursue the PhD, he/she is required, according to the Standards for the Establishment of Graduate Schools and other relevant laws and regulations, to complete the program to study at the university for the duration of study (three years, in principle) or longer, to receive necessary research supervision, and, after that, to pass the examination of the doctoral thesis and the examination. If such a student enters graduate school to pursue a PhD program through ICC, he/she will have to meet identical requirements for



completing the program as above mentioned, and the number of credits to be earned in the Japanese graduate school or the partner graduate school in a foreign country is not set. However, it is possible for graduate schools organizing the International Cooperative Major to set the earning of credits as the requirements for completing the PhD program and, it is also possible to determine whether the credits required for the completion of the program should be earned in Japanese graduate schools or partner graduate schools in foreign countries, or, how many credits should be earned at each of the Japanese graduate schools and the foreign partner graduate schools, based on consultation between both parties.

#### **(5) Status of Students in JD Programs**

- In the DCC Scheme, students register in and formally belong to one university. In JD programs, on the other hand, students belonging to an IC-D/M shall register for the student record at both Japanese and foreign partner universities as in DD programs.

Students' welfare and guidance, tuition, etc., is determined through mutual consultation of universities organizing ICC, which is one of the matters that a public notice requires universities involved to determine in their inter-university agreements.

- In preparation for a case in which it becomes difficult to maintain any IC-D/M for any reason on the side of partner universities (acts of God, civil commotion, interference from the foreign government in the academic freedom of Japanese universities, etc.), Japanese universities will have to set out internal rules that, in such circumstances, the university will protect the students involved by transferring them to another department, of the parent faculty, and recognizing credits earned from the foreign partner university as those from the department to which the students have been transferred under the credit transfer system. (The scheme permits Japanese universities to regard credits of courses jointly implemented as those acquired from themselves.). It should be noted, however, that universities are not permitted to convert all credits acquired from such an IC-D/M automatically to those from the department to which the students concerned have been transferred, and thus must take necessary steps for credit conversion in line with the curricula of the department to which the students have been transferred.

#### **(6) Admission Policy, Requirements for Admission and Selection of Entrants**

- Students in JD programs register at both Japanese and foreign universities, and thus must satisfy both the requirements for admission to Japanese universities prescribed in the School Education Law and other relevant laws and regulations, and the requirements for admission to partner universities in foreign countries.

The scheme prescribes that Japanese and foreign universities organizing JD programs will consult with each other to determine the method of selecting entrants, including the schedule of entrance examination and its subjects. The Guidelines for Selection of University Entrants has set out a new content covering JD programs.

### **(7) Academic staffs**

- Departments/majors having JD programs need to be organizations that (i) engage in education and research in a certain field of specialization and (ii) have a necessary faculty organization, facilities, equipment and other resources.

The Standards for the Establishment of Universities and various other standards are minimum requirements for the establishment of universities. In other words, the number of full-time academic staff prescribed in Article 13, of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities, the number of research supervisors prescribed in Article 9, of the Standards for the Establishment of Graduate Schools and other legal requirements are the minimum necessary to form an educational and research organization competent enough to confer degrees of the academic field concerned. In line with this, the relevant laws and regulations will require IC-D/M, as in the case with other departments/majors, to have the necessary number of full-time academic staffs.

- On the other hand, because JD programs in general are likely to be designed for a small number of students with the aim of international university collaboration in reality, approval for establishing IC-D/M will be granted on the premise that the departments will take advantage of academic staff, facilities, equipment and other resources of the parent faculties, and the number of students at the departments/majors will be counted as part of the admission capacity of such parent faculties, the relevant laws and regulations prescribe that academic staff of upper faculties may concurrently serve as full-time academic staff and research supervisors of IC-D/M.

However, the scheme requires Japanese universities to have one full-time academic staff for each IC-D/M who is not permitted to work concurrently for any other faculty on the grounds that such a full-time academic staff is needed to organize and implement ICC and coordinate with foreign universities.

### **(8) School Sites, School Buildings, Facilities, Equipment, etc.**

- The relevant laws and regulations prescribe that any university shall have the necessary area of its school sites and school buildings which is calculated in accordance with the types of faculties and the admission capacity. The ICC Scheme also requires universities to have the necessary area of their sites and buildings as prescribed in the Standards for the Establishment of Universities, assuming that the parent faculties of IC-D/M have sufficient educational resources. Since the admission capacity of IC-D/M shall be included in the parent faculties and no particular change shall be made to the main types and fields of degrees in the case of JD, as a consequence, part of the school sites and buildings of such parent faculties will be used for IC-D/M. Thus, the scheme prescribes that no university organizing ICC shall be required to have special facilities or equipment unless this arrangement causes any interference or trouble for any educational and research activities.

- On the other hand, students in JD programs will take courses at foreign universities for certain periods, so the scheme requires Japanese universities to not only prepare facilities and equipment of their own but also to collaborate with their partner universities in foreign countries to have them prepare facilities and equipment necessary for educational and research activities of such students.

### **(9) Discussion with Foreign Universities**

- The Items to Consult on with Partner Universities in Foreign Countries to Organize and Implement International Cooperative Curricula (Public Notice No. 168 of 2014, MEXT) prescribes matters that Japanese universities shall discuss with foreign universities to organize and implement ICC, including matters concerning, pursuant to the DCC Scheme:
  - (i) Organization of curricula;
  - (ii) Formulation of an educational organization;
  - (iii) Selection of entrants and conferment of degrees;
  - (iv) Management of enrollment and safety of students enrolled;
  - (v) Financial support, welfare and guidance for students; and
  - (vi) Evaluation of educational and research activities

In this regard, no laws and regulations specify any particular matters that Japanese universities must discuss when introducing the DCC Scheme because quality for a university in Japan can be secured under the School Education Law and any relevant laws and regulations. For the JD scheme, however, partner universities in foreign countries are not subject to approval for establishment by the Japanese government, and so quality must be assured through discussion matters. Thus, the Items to Consult on with Partner Universities in Foreign Countries to Organize and Implement International Cooperative Curricula (Public Notice No. 168 of 2014, MEXT) particularly lists matters that Japanese universities must discuss with their partner universities in foreign countries.

### **(10) Principle of Approval for Establishment of IC-D/M**

- To implement JD programs, Japanese universities must develop an organizational framework through which they can take responsibility for management of and response to educational programs, research supervision, degree approval, student records and other matters, as well as quality assurance that satisfies international competency. While the mechanism of quality assurance may take different forms in the school educational systems of different countries, the Japanese system assures its quality through internal check and by self-assessment of universities, examinations for approval for the establishment of universities by MEXT, and the certified evaluation and accreditation by external competent parties.

As for examinations for approval for establishment, pursuant to paragraph (4), Article 4, of the School Education Law, the Standards for Changes in Types and Fields of Academic Degrees prescribe the handling of degrees at Japanese universities. On the other hand, the

fields of degrees conferred by foreign universities may not be completely consistent with those of Japanese universities, though there is a certain commonness considering the international compatibility of academic degrees. Thus, the fields of degrees for IC-D/M may fall outside the coverage of the fields for which Japanese universities have already obtained approval even if they intend to organize ICC within the existing faculties. In light of these circumstances, the scheme in the Japanese legal sense recognizes the JD as a change in the fields of degrees and requires Japanese universities to obtain new approval for the establishment of such departments/majors rather than to submit notifications to MEXT.

What should be noted here is that, as long as no substantial changes are made to the main types and fields of degrees conferred by Japanese universities (that is, in the case that Japanese universities take advantage of part of the existing organizations, and are approved to establish departments/majors within a range of no substantial change in the educational environment), it is possible for JD programs to require students to take some courses that are outside of the field of degrees to be conferred.

- Examinations for approval for establishment essentially aim to see if the Japanese universities concerned have appropriate educational and research standards in line with the Standards for the Establishment of Universities and other relevant laws and regulations, and will not cover partner universities in foreign countries because they are outside the scope of the School Education Law, and other relevant laws and regulations of Japan. Even so, since they are involved in organizing curricula with Japanese universities, the scheme is designed to practically secure the quality of education and research of foreign partner universities by confirming whether inter-university agreements appropriately cover the necessary items as required by the Items to Consult on with Partner Universities in Foreign Countries to Organize and Implement International Cooperative Curricula (Public Notice No. 168 of 2014, MEXT).
- According to consultations held in advance with Japanese universities that aim to design a JD, it is likely that JD programs are mostly designed for a relatively small number of students based on the existing curricula offered by parent faculties. For flexible approval for the establishment of IC-D/M, a special examination body will be established under the Subcommittee on University Chartering, the Council for University Chartering and School Corporation to discuss appropriate methods and other related matters.

### **(11) Types of Schools subject to the Special Provision for International Cooperative Curricula**

- The types of schools that are entitled to organize and implement ICC in this scheme are faculties of universities, schools of graduate schools, departments of junior colleges, and schools of professional graduate schools. (Law schools and distance learning education will be excluded.)
- A deliberate consideration should take place to see if law schools are made subject to ICC Scheme. The aim of law schools is to train legal professionals, but the Government of Japan is currently discussing the possibility of fundamentally reviewing the present legal professional training systems in which law schools are placed as core educational institutions. Moreover, it will be necessary to make arrangements with the Ministry of Justice and other relevant organizations presiding over the national bar examination system about such details as minimum credits required for JD. Thus, it has been concluded that law schools will be excluded from the scheme at this time, though it is assumed that they will be made subject to the scheme in future.
- Degree programs consisting of distance learning remains outside the scope of ICC Scheme because the DCC Scheme has not introduced distance learning due to opinions that further discussion should take place to see if distance learning at on-campus education is appropriate to DCC Scheme. A decision for ICC Scheme will be made after the discussion about the introduction of distance learning to the DCC Scheme has come to a conclusion.
- The completion of formal curricula in some fields whose aim is to nurture relevant specialists (medical doctors, dentists, pharmaceutical chemists and veterinarians) is a prerequisite for qualifications for relevant national examinations. It is crucial to carefully examine whether ICC are relevant to these fields in light of the nurture of these specialists. The curricula in these fields are also inextricably linked with the acquisition of national qualifications, so that arrangements must be made in advance with the requirements for the qualifications prior to the introduction of ICC Scheme. Taking all these factors into account, a supplementary provision prescribes that academic programs of the field mentioned above serving as prerequisites for qualifications for national examinations be excluded from the scheme for the time being, while legal measures will be taken under the main rules of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities so that the possibility of introducing ICC Scheme to these fields can be examined in line with the operation of JD programs in other fields in future. As for the students who enter universities under the School Education Law by academic year 2017, graduate the four-year curricula in pharmacological sciences, and complete the master's or PhD degree programs in pharmacological sciences, there is a transitional measure that they can be qualified to take the national examination for pharmaceutical chemists, if the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare finds them to have the academic ability and skills equivalent or superior to those who have completed the six-year curricula and graduated, pursuant to the provisions

of the ordinance of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. However, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is considering excluding students that have completed the ICC from the application of the transitional measure.

- As for graduate schools of teacher education that aim to nurture academic staff, training academic staff capable of responding to globalization is clearly and urgently needed and it is possible to coordinate the ICC with qualifications for teaching certificates. Thus, necessary provisions set out to make it possible to introduce JD programs to graduate schools of teacher education.
- No ICC shall be implemented simultaneously with DCC since it will be a reduplication of special exceptions, which are DCC and ICC. As of May, 2013, total number of DCC launched so far is only four for undergraduates and six for graduate school. Also, the DCC Scheme itself is likely to be reviewed in the future in line with the spread of ICC in order to facilitate the introduction of the system by universities. Therefore, the latest revisions to the Standards for the Establishment of Universities and other relevant laws and regulations, do not permit any DCC to simultaneously implement ICC.
- Universities established by a private company are universities established pursuant to the Act on Special Zones for Structural Reform (Act No.189 of 2002) which prescribes a special case of the School Education Law, allowing not only the national government, local governments and school corporations, but also stock corporations, to establish universities. Since this type of university is treated in exactly the same manner as national and public and private universities in other provisions of the School Education Law, as well as the Standards for the Establishment of Universities and other laws and regulations, they are permitted to introduce ICC.
- Colleges of technology as well as special courses, diploma courses and other non-degree academic programs of universities are irrelevant to academic university degrees and are outside the coverage of the JD scheme. Collaboration between such colleges or non-degree courses of universities and foreign universities must be discussed separately from the JD scheme.

## Chapter 3 Points of Attention for the Establishment of JD Programs

International Cooperative Curricula are educational programs implemented jointly by Japanese and foreign universities. From the viewpoint of the “principle of territoriality,” however, Japanese laws and regulations can prescribe matters only in its own jurisdiction, and this suggests that they cannot regulate every aspect of JD programs. To this end, the Guidelines will present the overall picture of JD programs as well as points of attention in relation to matters that cannot be regulated by Japanese laws and regulations.

Japanese universities are legally required to establish IC-D/M prior to organizing and implementing ICC. However, it is assumed that Japanese universities rather are likely to use the term “educational programs” in reality when discussing JD programs with partner universities in foreign countries, and thus the Guidelines in this chapter will use the term “JD programs.”

### 1. Basic Matters

- ✓ JD programs aim to offer academic programs that cannot be offered by one single university in Japan or any foreign country through cooperation and collaboration between Japanese and foreign universities and the mutual use of shared educational resources.
- ✓ JD programs will be developed and implemented jointly by Japanese and foreign universities.
- ✓ The means of organizing JD programs will be regulated by the Japanese system to the extent possible, and may be affected by partner universities in foreign countries and the system of the countries concerned. Thus, JD programs can take various forms and must satisfy various requirements.

### 2. Basic Design of JD Programs

#### ◇ Degree level, academic field covered and name

To avoid misleading any party concerned, the following matters shall be clarified concerning JD programs, which are organized under mutual cooperation between Japanese and foreign universities in accordance with their educational philosophies and systems.

- (i) A program shall be named in a manner clearly indicating that the program concerned is a JD program of Japanese and foreign universities. The diploma form concerned, languages used and other aspects shall be made acceptable and universal in the countries concerned and internationally.
- (ii) The level of degrees (bachelor, master and PhD) to be offered shall be clearly presented. As associate degrees of junior college, master degrees at professional graduate schools and master degrees for teacher education in Japan may not

necessarily be available in the country concerned, the corresponding specific degree (associate degrees, bachelor, master and PhD) shall be clearly presented.

(iii) The field of specialization of degrees to be conferred shall be clearly and appropriately presented.

◇ Diploma

(i) Both Japanese and foreign universities shall reach an internal consensus and set out their own rules for the awarding of a single degree in their joint names.

(ii) Because they will jointly confer a single JD diploma, they are required to set out certain rules in advance in relation to, for example, which of the universities will actually present the diploma to students.

(iii) Japanese language shall always be used for JD diploma. On that basis, universities may use, if necessary, more than two languages, including Japanese. A diploma can be created in Japanese only, in Japanese and any official language of the country of the foreign university, or in Japanese and any other language which is more universal in the world. Universities shall set out a provision in their inter-university agreements of the language(s) used.

◇ Partner university(ies) in foreign country

(i) The country of any partner university shall have an official scheme of JD programs with universities in other countries.

(ii) Any partner university in a foreign country shall be a higher educational institution that is approved under the official school educational system of the country concerned, correspond to universities in Japan, and have obtained official quality assurance (such as the certified evaluation and accreditation) required in the country concerned.

(iii) Any partner university in a foreign country shall be approved to implement JD programs under a JD scheme in the country concerned.

(iv) Any partner university in a foreign country shall be authorized to confer effective degrees of the same level as JD under the JD program with a Japanese university, and have a track record in conferral of degrees of the said level.

(v) Any partner university in a foreign country shall have educational resources (academic staff with certain job positions, qualifications and appropriate specialty; necessary school sites, school buildings, facilities, equipment, etc.) sufficient to cooperate with a Japanese university.

\* In the event that the country of a candidate for partnership has no quality assurance system, and the candidate university itself is not recognized as an official university or other higher education institution in, for example, UNESCO Portal to Recognized Higher Education Institutions (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/resources/unesco-portal-to-recognized-higher-education-institutions>), the Japanese university concerned shall consult with



MEXT in advance.

◇ Inter-university agreement

To ensure stable and continuous educational cooperation with partner universities in foreign countries, responsible persons authorized for relevant decision-making of the universities concerned shall preliminarily agree on necessary matters in an agreement or other form.

- (i) The universities concerned shall agree on the policy of JD program management in detail in an agreement or other form under the names of those persons responsible.

For example, the policy on management of JD programs includes: the number of students enrolled in JD programs at each university; parties responsible for the programs; selection of entrants and students; affiliates and allocation of academic staff; status of students in the school register; welfare services to students; descriptions and approaches of education and research; program management; the allocation of expenses; responsibilities to students; tuition; handling of intellectual property rights; procedures at the time of termination or abolition of programs (including transitional steps while students are still enrolled in JD programs, and handling of the student record after abolition); and other management policies necessary for the organization and implementation of JD programs.

- (ii) Prior to concluding an inter-university agreement, the universities concerned shall mutually confirm the nature of the cooperative activities that the other party intends to perform under the agreement (i.e., the universities concerned shall be cautious enough to avoid any circumstances in which they find it difficult to appropriately fulfill their responsibilities for quality assurance, such as a situation where one university confers degrees on its students without the consent of the other university.)
- (iii) The JD programs shall be established by fully ensuring the actual use of educational resources of both parties.
- (iv) To facilitate the coordination and discussion of important matters in compliance with the inter-university agreement concluded, the universities concerned shall establish a council or other entities comprising authorized persons for JD programs or persons delegated to have such authority, and hold regular meetings.

◇ Selection, screening, etc. of entrants to JD program

- (i) The universities concerned shall determine and agree on the method of selecting entrants and students in their inter-university agreements. It is recommended that the Japanese university and its partner university in a foreign country jointly select entrants because they should agree on the acceptance of students. For selections made independently by the universities as well as selections made jointly in part, the Japanese university shall decide in advance the procedures from selection to

approval in detail in consultation with its partner university.

- (ii) When advertising JD programs, the universities concerned shall announce sufficient information in advance so that no question will arise. The said information shall include degrees to be conferred, requirements for graduation, descriptions and approaches of education, schedule, tuition and fees, learning workload and scholarships, welfare services and other forms of support.
- (iii) For admission of students to JD programs, the universities concerned shall bear in mind the difference in qualifications for admission in the school education system of the countries concerned, and handle applications in an appropriate manner in compliance with the respective systems. (For example, the legal system of a certain country may grant admission to university to persons who would not satisfy the qualifications for admission in Japan, that is, students of partner universities in foreign countries may not officially enroll in JD programs unless they satisfy the qualifications for admission to university in Japan.)

◇ Student registry and record

Students in JD programs may need to register at both Japanese and foreign partner universities, so the universities concerned shall responsibly and appropriately handle and manage the student registry and record (e.g., the universities concerned shall determine in advance the handling of student registries and records after abolition of JD programs.)

◇ Size

The program size shall be in a range appropriate so that the universities concerned and relevant organizations can manage the JD programs with respect to, e.g., the number of students accepted in each JD program and impact of the program size on the existing educational and research organizations.

### **3. Curriculum Design, Examination for Conferral of Degree, etc.**

◇ Human resources to be developed

Each Japanese university and its partner university in a foreign country shall have and share a clear vision of human resources to be developed in JD programs.

◇ Language

For smooth coordination of curricula and promotion of exchanges, the universities concerned shall:

- (i) make various arrangements, such as provision of academic programs and classes in common languages that are universally spoken around the world (including English), in both a Japanese university and its partner university in a foreign country; and

- (ii) build a sufficient support system, including language education programs, to ensure that students can smoothly engage in study, if classes are given in Japanese in the Japanese university and another language in the partner university.

◇ Form of education

The Japanese university shall discuss and agree on the forms of education with its partner university in a foreign country in compliance with the laws and regulations of Japan and the foreign country concerned (e.g., courses offered at universities which require students to actually attend; courses which allow students to attend online without study abroad; courses offered by academic staff of the partner university who visit and stay in the other country, etc.)

◇ Classes with various types of media in a highly advanced manner

As in Section 2 (3) of Chapter 2, it is possible to conduct classes using various types of media in a highly advanced manner in classrooms and elsewhere at Japanese universities and their partner universities in foreign countries. An objective of JD programs is, however, to expect students in ICC to visit/come and stay at universities, respectively, for a certain period of time for educational opportunities, and therefore, it would be inconsistent with the objective if it became possible for students to stay at one university or in one country, alone, to take intensive advantage of various media and other tools to attend classes, and complete the JD program.

To this end, each university shall set the maximum number of credits from classes using various types of media in a highly advanced manner at 30 credits when establishing an ICC.

Meanwhile, the provisions of paragraph (5), Article 32, of the Standards for Establishment of Universities and other laws and regulations prescribe that the number of credits earned for classes using various types of media in a highly advanced manner shall not exceed 60 credits. These provisions are applicable to any ICC, so that universities are required to note that the number of credits from such classes shall be limited to a maximum of 60 credits.

◇ Requirements for graduation and completion

It is necessary to satisfy both the requirements for graduation from each degree program and also for completion of JD programs at the Japanese universities and their partner universities in foreign countries.

- (i) **Credits and program years:** The number of credits (124 credits or more at undergraduate of Japanese universities) and program years (four years or more at undergraduate of Japanese universities) required for graduation from, or completion of, degree programs at each university, as well as the requirements of JD programs (62 credits or more at a Japanese university and 31 credits or more at its partner university in a foreign country in JD programs at the undergraduate

level), shall be satisfied.

- (ii) **Thesis:** For the compulsory thesis required for completion at each university (writing a thesis is compulsory in master and PhD degree programs in Japan)—except in cases where students are assigned to alternatively engage in a specific research project or take a qualifying examination--students shall have their thesis examined and pass an examination. It is assumed that students will be supervised by academic staff of both the universities concerned jointly.

◇ Earning of credits

- (i) Japanese universities shall confirm the credit system (academic workload including course hours, method of recognizing credits, etc.) and any differences in schedule regarding the acquisition of degrees, order of courses to be taken, academic calendar and other aspects with their partner universities in foreign countries.
- (ii) JD programs shall focus on course work and comprise courses whose names give a clear indication of the content of the courses. When recognizing credits obtained at partner universities in foreign countries, Japanese universities shall respect standard course hours per credit at the foreign universities into the Japanese standard course hours per credit.

◇ Courses Jointly Designed

- (i) Notwithstanding the provision of paragraph (1), Article 19, of the Standards for the Establishment of Universities (Japanese universities shall set up a series of courses needed by themselves), “courses jointly designed” are special courses to be organized and implemented jointly by Japanese universities and their partner universities in foreign countries exclusively under the JD program. Every university forming a JD program shall avoid recognizing courses already organized and implemented by the other university as its own.
- (ii) Prior to organizing the courses jointly designed, the universities concerned shall agree on descriptions and approaches of education, teaching materials, grading methods, expenses of course implementation, and other aspects, and appropriately determine the role of each party.

**Examples of efforts prior to organizing courses jointly designed**

Joint determination of class style (lecture/seminar), syllabi, number of credits, formulation of evaluation guidelines for grading (absolute or relative evaluation), team teaching, etc.

◇ Grading

- (i) To make curricula acceptable and universally international, the universities concerned shall clarify the standards of competencies that students are required to attain to earn degrees, and grade the performance of students in a transparent, objective and strict manner by, for example, introducing a grade point average (GPA) or mutually cross-checking evaluation.
- (ii) The universities concerned shall discuss and agree in advance on the viewpoint, standards and other aspects of grading.

◇ Thesis

Taking into account systems and actual situations of partner universities and the countries, the Japanese universities shall fully consider the methods of supervision, including joint supervision for quality assurance.

◇ Degree examination for graduation

- (i) Japanese universities shall fully collaborate with the partner universities in foreign countries to ensure appropriate examinations for graduation approval by, for example, setting out standards to jointly examine conferral of degrees.
- (ii) The qualifications and specialties of academic staff in charge of examination for graduation approval at partner universities in foreign countries are not necessarily identical to those at Japanese universities. The universities concerned shall secure the equivalence of such qualifications and specialties between academic staff examining conferral of degrees at the universities.

◇ Supervision system

The universities concerned shall have a satisfactory system to supervise students.

- (i) They shall take appropriate measures especially for master degree and PhD programs so that students in such programs can receive research supervision from all academic staff members of the universities who are responsible for their degrees. Such measures may include the designation of a leading supervisor and sub-supervisors for each student out of the academic staff members of all universities responsible for the degree of the student concerned.
- (ii) Japanese universities shall make arrangements so that students at their partner universities in foreign countries can receive the supervision of academic staff of the Japanese universities by, for example, online.

◇ Academic staff

- (i) Any IC-D/M organizing JD programs at a Japanese university shall have full-time academic staff equal to or exceeding the standards stipulated in the Standards for the Establishment of Universities and other laws and regulations. Such departments/majors may include academic staff who work concurrently for

another department/major of the faculty/school in which the said departments are situated, in the number stipulated. However, such department/major shall have at least one full-time academic staff member who does not work concurrently for any other department, and that full-time staff member shall exclusively engage in coordination with the partner university in a foreign country in addition to his/her own educational and research activities.

- (ii) Academic staff at each university shall be regarded as those employed by the said university under employment contracts and will not necessarily be required to work concurrently for JD programs even if they participate in the operation of JD programs. (No Japanese laws and regulations will require any academic staff member at foreign partner universities to conclude any employment contract with the Japanese university with which he/she works in implementation of JD programs.)

◇ School site, buildings, facilities, equipment, etc.

The universities concerned may use any facilities, equipment and other resources on the premises for JD programs but shall refrain from interfering with the smooth operation of both JD programs and any other educational and research activities of the existing departments/majors.

◇ Mobility of students (studying abroad and period of attendance at university)

One important principle of JD programs is to provide opportunities for students to spend time at partner universities in foreign countries for a certain period of time to take advantage of different educational opportunities, so the universities concerned shall secure such educational opportunities by means of:

- (i) formulating curricula so that students can attend a certain number of classes collectively for a certain period;
- (ii) reducing the burden as much as possible for students who move between Japanese and foreign universities;
- (iii) taking care not to create an excessive burden of course taking and other extra-curricular activities, including job-hunting; and
- (iv) ensuring the balanced mobility of students to participate as much as possible.

◇ Study environment

The universities concerned shall fully consider ensuring an appropriate study environment throughout the entire track for the JD program.

#### 4. Other

◇ Tuition, scholarships, etc.

- (i) The universities concerned shall consider the benefit of students so that they will not bear an excessive burden of tuition in compensation for the value of JD, etc. which is incurred as a result of registering at more than one university. (For instance, the universities shall avoid double charge of tuitions.)
- (ii) The universities concerned shall pay attention to balance and fairness among students at the Japanese and partner universities in foreign countries.
- (iii) The universities concerned shall consider the financial burden of studying abroad on students (special financial supports, etc.)
- (iv) The universities concerned shall consider the welfare of the students.

◇ Safety net

The universities concerned shall set out necessary policies and measures in advance in preparation for a case where a student must abandon his/her studies or fails to satisfy the requirements for completion of the program for any reason; or that it becomes difficult for either university to continue the JD program (due to acts of God, civil unrest, etc.). Such policies and measures may include the transfer of students to another department or major, treatment of credits already earned as those for other departments or majors, and provision of supplementary courses, all of which shall be implemented through the responsibility of the university concerned.

◇ Evaluation and quality assurance

It is necessary to ensure the quality of degrees when implementing JD programs. The universities concerned shall clarify the value added to each JD in comparison with any other single degree conferred by each university, and assume accountability for the capacity and other aspects of learning outcomes of students who have completed the JD program, not just to the students themselves but also to society. To this end, the universities concerned shall take every possible step to avoid concerns being raised about the quality of the JD program after students have completed said program.

- (i) When organizing a JD program, the university concerned shall publish information about it promptly to students and the public as well as to foreign countries.
- (ii) The universities concerned shall establish a permanent steering committee or other body which will discuss JD programs from time to time with their partner universities in foreign countries.

More specifically, a permanent steering committee or other body, formulated in a Japanese university by the Japanese university and its foreign partner university to implement JD programs, shall ensure the quality of the JD program.

Members of the permanent steering committee or other body shall include professors of the Japanese university who hold a PhD in the same academic field as, or a similar field to, the JD programs, and who have experience in conferring PhD degrees.

- (iii) Japanese universities shall include their JD programs in self-assessment for certified evaluation and accreditation.
- (iv) To confirm the official quality assurance of partner universities in foreign countries, the Japanese universities shall confirm--when organizing JD curricula—what kind of subject quality assurance or vocational qualification organization has given authentication to the foreign partner university.

NB: To maintain the quality assurance of JD programs implemented by higher education institutions in Japan and gain credibility from foreign countries, the Japanese universities actively committed to JD programs are strongly expected to take the initiative in sharing relevant information and assuring quality through peer review and other activities. Such peer reviews will preferably be those with the participation of persons well versed in quality assurance, and persons from private companies, research institutes, foreign universities and other organizations, rather than those normally conducted by academic staff of the universities themselves. It is also worth considering building a mechanism whereby peer reviews can be conducted in academic journals published by universities.

◇ Recognition and evaluation by society

It is extremely important to respect the viewpoint of students and have JD programs recognized and highly valued by society, including by private companies for which students will work in the future. The universities concerned shall promote, give account of, and make known the effectiveness and other aspects of JD programs to society.



## Chapter 4 Joint Educational Programs, including Double Degree

To date, “the Guidelines for Building Organized and Continuous Educational Cooperation Including Double and Joint Degree Programs,” formulated in May 2010 (Central Council for Education Working Group on the Promotion of Globalizing Universities), has presented the operation policy of DD programs. However, since the legal scheme has recently been revised for JD, the Guidelines is abolished.

Even so, after examining the relationship with JD programs, some parts of the guidelines should still be referred to, and, as a result, will be referred to in this chapter.

The establishment of DD programs does not require any approval for its establishment, as heretofore. But Japanese universities are required to be fully aware that the implementation of DD programs impacts the credibility of not just the said universities themselves but also of all the academic degrees of Japanese universities, and must thus commit themselves to the maintenance and improvement of the quality of DD programs.

Universities are also expected to refer to the points of attention cited in these Guidelines for JD programs when designing and operating DD programs.

### **1. Basic Principles**

A DD program is a program in which two universities each confer degrees in specific academic fields. In other words, the two universities take a step further from normal credit transfer to concluding an agreement to cooperate to enable students to acquire two degrees with a somewhat reduced workload within a somewhat shorter period of time than studying at one university to obtain one degree and then studying at another university to obtain another degree.

A DD program is implemented by more than one entity, each of which can confer degrees independently. While each university offers its own curriculum, it develops a common program with its partner university so that each can mutually confer degrees. The workload of students in a DD program can be double at a maximum, but less than double in practice because many universities having DD programs normally conclude credit transfer agreements with their partner universities.

The relationship between JD and DD programs can be understood in various ways. Some regard JD programs as a more developed version of DD programs, and others regard them as different programs having different purposes. But all of this depends on the principles of the universities designing these programs. Thus, universities must have a meticulous plan with clear visions and objectives when building joint educational degree programs.

It should also be noted that Japanese universities may not choose JD or DD programs in some cases if the countries of their partner universities have certain systems which limit the pursuit of joint educational program and leave no choice to Japanese universities.

## **2. Points of Attention for Operation of DD Programs**

### **(1) Issues to be examined at the outset**

It is recommended that universities confirm that their intended partner universities are permitted to function as universities by the quality assurance framework in the country or area where they operate, including the accreditation by certified bodies. It might be also useful to confirm that partner universities are listed in the UNESCO Portal to Recognized Higher Education Institutions.

Next, it is recommended to fully consider within the university meanings of establishing educational affiliation with partner universities, estimates of student enrollment, and faculty allocation, etc. It is important to clarify the basic policies to build organized, continuous cooperation with their partner universities and share the understanding among those who are concerned. It is also recommended that universities clarify and confirm the types of degrees that will be conferred by their partner universities (e.g., regular diplomas, other kinds of certificates).

Moreover, it is recommended to confirm that programs under consideration in universities in Japan are not in conflict with any laws and regulations such as the Standards for Establishing Universities.

### **(2) Agreements on joint implementation**

It is recommended that universities make agreements in writing with each partner university in the name of persons such as the president and the regent who are responsible for the management of the university to ensure the stable and continuous implementation of cooperation. Such agreements should include the number of students, faculty arrangements, the content of academic activities, program management, the allocation of expenses, responsibilities to students, tuition, procedures to be undertaken upon completion of the program, etc. Here it is important to understand what their partner universities are trying to develop through cooperation based on the agreements, so that the cooperation does not cause situations where it is difficult to appropriately fulfill their responsibilities, for example, in the case where one university issues degrees that the other university does not expect.

Also, it is recommended to establish a practice of periodically holding official meetings with partner universities based on the agreements, consisting of the persons who are directly responsible or to whom authority has been delegated, in order to implement the necessary arrangements and discuss important issues. Similarly, it is recommended to specify particular offices in the university for information sharing, various reference and coordination with contact persons in their partner universities so that the program will be managed in an organized and continuous way.

### **(3) Organization of curricula**

It is recommended that universities verify the accreditations held by their partner universities that have been acquired and assured in terms of the quality assurance framework, including those in a particular field or vocational framework.

Next, it is recommended to confirm the kind of credit system (learning hours, including class hours, calculation for transferring credits, etc.) used by their partner universities, as well as any different timeframe for completing programs, the order of course registration, the procedures for credit transfer, the difference of academic calendar, and the differentiation between compulsory courses and elective courses, so that there will be no hindrance for students. It is also strongly recommended that universities make efforts to organize curricula with systematic coursework and course titles that properly reflect the content, and that universities should always keep the credits substantial, in accordance with the credit system used by their partner universities. In terms of credit transfer, it may be useful to consider introducing an existing international framework.

Also, it is recommended to offer attractive courses, including those taught in English, with their partner universities, to make programs more attractive and to facilitate the smooth arrangement and coordination of curricula. Similarly, it is recommended to make efforts to reduce any difficulty for students and enhance the quality of the programs, such as joint instruction approaches where professors responsible teach at each other's campuses.

Based on these viewpoints, it is recommended to clarify the competency that should be achieved by students for completion through communication/dialogue with their partner universities, and conduct transparent, objective, and strict grading policies including grade point average and peer review of grading to make the curricula more substantial and visible.

Also, it is recommended to provide appropriate supervision for master and doctoral students, such as appointing professors from all participating universities to every student so that each student can receive instruction from all of them.

### **(4) Degree examination for graduation**

It is recommended that universities ensure that they conduct an examination for approving graduation appropriately among all responsible universities with quality assurance. The following issues, especially, should be discussed in the case of examining theses, while respecting the system and other conditions of the partner universities: the number, content, language and other fundamentals for submitting theses, the schedule for examination, and how examination and joint instruction by professors is to be conducted. It may be that other procedures, such as submitting outcomes of intensive study in particular topics, would be accepted for examination on graduation approval in place of submitting a thesis, as long as such is permitted by national law and regulations. It should be restrained to consider the program in which the student can obtain multiple degrees with one thesis, so that the conferred degree would be duly respected in terms of quality

assurance. It is recommended to take appropriate measures to hold a committee meeting for degree examination for approving graduation for master and doctoral levels, such as the participation of professors from their partner universities. In this case, these participant professors should be appointed as joint examiners in accordance with Article 5 of the Rules for Degrees.

It is recommended that the diploma be supplemented with documents such as academic portfolios and diploma supplements, which state the outline of program and the competency acquired through its completion.

#### **(5) Evaluation of educational and research activities**

It is recommended that universities have appropriate evaluation of the program for its educational and research activities when implementing self-assessment, or certified evaluation and accreditation for the entire university, or when receiving certified evaluation and accreditation for educational and research activities of academic programs in professional graduate schools.

#### **(6) Student support**

It is recommended that universities create concrete procedures for recruiting students, including selection criteria, and, in principle, publish all related materials. This can be applied to cases where such a program is only intended for new students for admission or where students already enrolled in various departments or graduate schools can apply. Also, it is important to consult with partner universities about what should be done when the number of applicants is insufficient to launch the program, so that applicants would not suffer any disadvantage.

Next, it is recommended to take appropriate measures for responsibility to students concerning the enrollment status of students participating in the program while there may be cases that a student is registered in both a Japanese university and a partner foreign university during the same period of time. It is important to keep in mind that all concerned universities keep up with and share the latest information about academic and everyday conditions of the students, and that these universities build a continuous student support system, including appropriate instruction on taking courses and receiving various support services for the well-being of students as well as consultation in advance the case of student' failure of completion of study. Also, it is recommended to make agreements concerning the tuition to be paid by participating students who might be concurrently enrolled in more than two universities, for the benefit of participating students and to respect fairness among students belonging to different universities. Assuring an appropriate educational environment entirely for students should also be carefully discussed. Throughout these considerations, it is recommended to make every effort to relieve the costs borne by students to travel between campuses so that students will have little difficulty in taking classes and participating in extracurricular activities.

Similarly, in order to ensure that the program is implemented in a stable and continuous

manner, it is recommended to agree with partner universities on appropriate policies and measures, in advance, for a case in which it becomes difficult for either one or more universities to continue to offer the program due to unforeseen reasons. It should be noted that universities are responsible for consultation with authorities for advice and making it possible to provide courses to students.

**(7) Information publication**

It is recommended that universities publish information about the policies, procedures and output in view of the above guidelines, and request their partner universities to take the necessary actions for ensuring that the quality of the program is secured and accountable, so that students can make sense of the program and thereby make suitable choices, as necessary.

Also, it is recommended to make every effort to create opportunities to publicize educational outcomes of an organized and continual cooperation so that efforts by the universities concerned and learning outcomes of participating students will be widely understood by society.