

Conjoint Ventures in Postgraduate Courses

Approved by: Academic Board on 11 August 1999
Date of effect: 12 August 1999
Date amended: 15 May 2017 (administrative amendments)
23 October 2017 (administrative amendment)

1. Preamble

- (1) 'Conjoint ventures', where two or more institutions cooperate to provide a unit or course of study to students, are of especial interest in the rapidly changing area of coursework postgraduate studies.
- (2) Conjoint ventures offer the potential for increased flexibility, diversity, and disciplinary specialization of university studies. They are premised in the notion that universities add to the value of their course offerings through a cooperative deployment of their resources across institutional boundaries.
- (3) Whilst conjoint ventures undoubtedly raise the potential for difficulties of an academic-logistic nature, and these potential hazards must be addressed in the planning and preparation of such courses, their potential for a positive impact upon university cultures will go some way to redress the difficulties. Conjoint ventures open up their participating institutions to cross-fertilisation, including enhanced reconciliation between the protocols and practices of separate institutions.
- (4) The University of Sydney aims to provide the highest quality courses to its postgraduate students and potential postgraduate enrolees. The University is committed to the development of conjoint ventures in the field of postgraduate coursework along lines which are compatible with standing University commitments to equity, administrative transparency and efficiency, and the rigorous pursuit of academic excellence.

2. Background information

- (1) The University has been involved in conjoint ventures of varying kinds for many years. The assumption behind the need to develop a University policy is that conjoint ventures are likely to increase in number, due to the substantial academic benefits that may be derived from them, and that there is consequently a pressing need to ensure systematically that courses under such ventures meet basic academic standards.
- (2) Arrangements have existed, for example, between individual departments at the University of Sydney and individual departments at UNSW or UTS whereby

students enrolled for a degree at one institution could complete one or more units of study at another institution, to count towards the award program at their "home" institution. Such arrangements have been based upon differing levels of formality: in some instances students have enrolled at the other institution as "non-degree", "non-award" or "miscellaneous" students; in other cases they have enrolled in a unit of study at their "home" institution but have attended classes at another institution and had the result recorded on their transcript (and the "home" department has paid the department in the other institution). These types of arrangements have often been established in order to rationalise resources in the metropolitan area.

- (3) In 1997 approval was given by the Academic Board and Senate for the introduction of two innovative conjoint ventures: that in Public History and that of cotutelle arrangements.
- (4) The Joint Program of the University of Sydney and the University of Technology, Sydney provides that all candidates for the Master of Letters in Public History, the Master of Arts in Public History, a Graduate Diploma in Public History or the Graduate Certificate in Public History enrol initially at UTS. After one or two semesters candidates may elect to transfer their candidatures to the University of Sydney. The institution at which they complete their award program and from which they receive their award is determined by where they complete the majority of their coursework. The cotutelle framework established by the French Government is designed to establish and develop partnerships between French and other research units which include the facilitation of movement of French and other doctoral candidates under joint supervision arrangements. The outcome of a joint doctoral thesis submission is that the candidate, following an agreed single examining process, receives a doctoral award from each institution, qualified by the statement that the degree was obtained under a "cotutelle" agreement. The candidate benefits under this arrangement in that he or she has the opportunity to work in two countries and obtains awards that are recognised in both the French and English speaking worlds, thus facilitating professional mobility. The advantages of such agreements extend beyond the benefit to the individual candidate, however, and should be seen in the context of enhanced research cooperation between the two institutions and the two supervisors concerned.

3. Policy

University policy on conjoint ventures in postgraduate coursework, as adopted by the Academic Board at its meeting on 11 August 1999, is as follows:

- (1) A demonstrable connection between conjoint ventures and the realisation of increased flexibility, diversity, and disciplinary specialisation of university studies must be maintained and understood at all times.
- (2) Any conjoint venture proposal must be wholly compatible with minimum standards and practices, as promulgated within the University of Sydney.
- (3) A transparent and equitable rationale must be explicitly provided, in the development of any conjoint venture, for associated fees structures and for the allocation to students of academic and administrative support, including facilities.

- (4) Administrative structures and academic requirements, including assessment practices, must be clear in any conjoint venture proposal, with any departures from the policy and/or standard practice of the University of Sydney explicitly acknowledged and directly justified.

4. Administrative aspects of implementation

Any arrangement to offer a unit of study or course under a conjoint venture arrangement is classified as a "major change" and, as such, is subject to the:

- (1) [Educational Services Agreements Policy 2017](#); and
- (2) [Learning and Teaching Policy 2015](#)
- (3) [Learning and Teaching Procedures 2016](#)