

AGREEMENT ON A DOUBLE DIPLOMA MASTER PROGRAMME IN BIOLOGY

between

Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas, Lithuania),
represented by Professor Juozas Augutis, Rector
(K. Donelaičio g. 58, LT-44248, Kaunas, Lithuania),
and

M. Kozybaev North Kazakhstan State University (Petrovsk, Republic of Kazakhstan)
represented by Professor Omirbayev Serik Maulenovich, Rector
(A. Pushkin street 86, 150000, Petrovsk, Republic of Kazakhstan)

1. PREAMBLE

In the spirit of prolific international relations and academic cooperation, Vytautas Magnus University (hereinafter referred to as "VMU") and the M. Kozybaev North Kazakhstan State University (hereinafter referred to as "NKSU") wish to strengthen their ties further, in accordance with their mutual interests in delivering programmes of academic excellence and cultural diversity. Hence, NKSU and VMU have decided to conclude this Agreement on a Double Diploma Programme (hereinafter the "DDP") that allows students to obtain two degrees at the graduate level.

This Agreement has been entered into between VMU and NKSU to facilitate credit transfer and provide a smooth transition of students from NKSU to VMU in order for them to obtain VMU Master's degree in Molecular biology and NKSU Master's degree in Biology. The Agreement is in compliance with the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania and the Law on Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

2. SCOPE OF COOPERATION

This Agreement delineates the legal and organizational framework for the DDP in Biology. The programme will provide the opportunity to graduate students from NKSU to simultaneously pursue the Master's degree in Molecular biology from VMU and Master's degree in Biology from NKSU, by completing the first year of their academic studies in Biology at NKSU and continuing the next year of their studies in VMU, fulfilling the requirements necessary to obtain the Master's degree in Biology and Molecular biology, and in accordance with the transfer chart provided in Appendix 2. The aim is to enable NKSU students of Biology to receive degrees from both Universities.

Upon the successful completion of the DDP, the following degrees shall be awarded by the partner institutions:

NKSU

- *Master in Biology (Programme in 6M060700 Biology)*

VMU

- *Master in Molecular biology (Programme in Molecular biology and biotechnology)*

3. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

3.1 Both Parties agree to provide all necessary means and resources to implement and operate the DDP in accordance with the conditions set forth in this Agreement.

3.2 VMU shall assist the incoming DDP students when dealing with academic, administrative, organisational and social-cultural issues.

3.3 Each institution will nominate a programme coordinator who will ensure that the DDP proceeds in accordance with a mutually agreed academic plan, and that this Agreement is executed in full.

3.4 The programme coordinators assigned in both institutions shall be obliged to do the following:

- a) identify the target number of students to study in the DDP each year; the number will be negotiated

and determined well in advance prior to the deadline for submitting applications, being regulated on a yearly basis, depending on the availability of places;

- b) guarantee the monitoring of the study program and its compliance with regulations on both the institutional and the national level;
- c) discuss and approve changes in the programme, including the number of credits, teaching load, co-independent work by the student, etc.;
- d) approve the final study plans of the student (Learning Agreement);
- e) monitor, control and implement the quality assurance plan;
- f) manage administrative and academic issues.

4. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS, SELECTION AND STUDY PROGRAMME

4.1 The candidates to enter the programme shall be selected by NKSU in accordance with the selection criteria jointly defined and agreed upon by NKSU and VMU. The selection of the participants in the DDP will be based on:

- a) Transcript of student's records with his/her courses and grades;
- b) Letter of confirmation from the sending institution;
- c) Language proficiency certificate;
- d) Other requirements set between the partner institutions;
- e) For students from NKSU as the sending institution, the required English level is B1¹ or higher, alternative - 4,5 or higher grade of IELTS exam.

4.2 Selected students will be reviewed by VMU upon completing a formal application to the degree programme within the deadlines imposed by the partner institution.

4.3 VMU has the right to reject candidates proposed by the NKSU for academic rationales or any other substantial reason that has occurred during the joint selection process, but is obliged to motivate this rejection.

This Agreement applies to NKSU students of Biology master study programme who have successfully completed the courses, the volume of which is 60 credits according to European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) (this number may slightly vary each year due to the actual regulations of NKSU and VMU).

4.4 Both VMU and NKSU shall be granted access to all written application documents and protocols of selection procedures for the programme. Both universities reserve the right to send a representative with an advisory capacity to the interviews conducted by NKSU to select the candidates.

4.5 The courses shall be taught in English during the studies in VMU.

4.6 Within the programme, the degrees of NKSU and of VMU shall be managed separately. This means that once selected for the programme, the students shall regularly and separately enrol into the Master's programme at VMU or NKSU. The separate management of two degrees also enables the student to quit the DDP and continue his/ her studies in the NKSU programme only.

4.7 This Agreement provides the selected students with the guarantee that the credit transfer and recognition mechanisms shall be implemented. VMU shall also send the transcripts of records (ECTS model) to NKSU as soon as they are available and vice versa. At the end of two years, each student shall be subjected to a procedure designed to examine whether he/she has fulfilled all the requirements necessary to receive the degree from both institutions. This procedure shall be jointly monitored by the academic coordinators managing the DDP in both institutions.

4.8 According to the rules prevailing in each institution, students may receive an honourable mention, if they fulfil the requirements.

¹ According to CEF, B1 level refers to a threshold or intermediate level.

4.9 The diploma awarded by NKSU shall be issued in Kazakh, Russian or English language, refer to this Agreement and acknowledge the existence of the other diploma awarded on the basis of this Agreement. The diploma awarded by VMU shall be issued in English. This diploma shall refer to this Agreement and acknowledge the existence of the other diploma awarded in accordance with this Agreement. The Diploma Supplement or other respective documents shall refer to a document comprising the information that is usually presented in the Diploma Supplements of the two universities. The Diploma Supplement will be issued by VMU.

5. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

5.1 The structure of the Double Diploma Master's Programme both at NKSU and VMU is provided in Appendix 1 of this Agreement.

5.2 The equivalent courses of the Double Diploma Master's Programme both at NKSU and VMU are provided in Appendix 2 of this Agreement.

5.3 The intended period of study for the DDP shall be two (2) years (four semesters). Semesters from the first to the second shall be taught at NKSU. The third semester shall be taught in VMU. The fourth semester (preparation of master thesis) can be done in VMU or in NKSU. In order to meet the requirements for a double diploma, the students are required to study for at least one (1) semester at the receiving institution and must obtain the credits required by the specific course at the partner institution and the remaining semesters and credits at their sending institution.

5.4 Students enrolled in the programme shall have access to courses and enjoy the same rights and privileges and be subjected to the same rules and regulations as the regular students in both institutions.

6. FINAL THESIS

6.1 As it has been already established in the Agreement, in addition to the term papers at both institutions, the students enrolled in the programme shall be required to write the final thesis.

6.2 The final theses written during the DDP shall be jointly supervised by both institutions. Consequently, the students shall choose the main and the second supervisor, appointed jointly by both institutions.

6.3 The outcome of the final project might take the form of a written academic paper in English (thesis). A thesis must always include a brief summary of at least 1 page as an abstract in English. The thesis should be defended in English and in accordance with the regulations prevailing at partner institution. A copy of the thesis shall be sent to the partner institution and included into the student's file.

6.4 The management process of the final thesis defence should meet all legal and academic constraints of both institutions. However, this process shall be adjusted as much as possible in order to avoid unnecessary inconveniences for the students.

6.5 In addition, after defending final thesis NKSU students must take State Attestation in Kazakhstan. Only after successful attestation DDP students can get NKSU Master of Biology diploma.

7. FINANCIAL ISSUES

7.1 Students shall be responsible for covering their travel costs to the receiving institution and living costs throughout their stay, including accommodation (VMU shall render assistance to the incoming students in finding appropriate accommodation), food expenses, books, equipment, consumables, prerequisite health insurance, a student union fee (if applicable) and other expenses arising out of the exchange.

7.2 Tuition fees, travel costs to the receiving institution, health insurance, visa fees, accommodation in the hostel of the host Party and the payment of scholarships to students studying on the state educational order is carried out by the sending Party.

7.3 Payment for tuition, travel costs to the receiving institution, health insurance, visa fees, and accommodation in the hostel of the receiving Party for students enrolled on the basis of the paid

provision of educational services, carried out by students on their own.

7.4 The tuition fee for one (1) semester at VMU is 1850 EUR.

7.5 Additional agreements regarding the tuition fees at VMU can be negotiated on a yearly basis, taking into consideration a number and/or academic achievements of the candidates and other aspects.

8. DURATION, AMENDMENT, REVIEW AND TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

8.1 This Agreement shall come into effect on the day of signature by both institutions and shall be valid for five years. Both institutions may terminate this Agreement, provided that the written notice of the intent is issued at least six months prior to termination. Commitments already in progress shall be fulfilled.

8.2 Evaluation of this Agreement will be initiated by both institutions at least six months prior to its expiration. The Agreement is based on long-term strategic cooperation interests of both institutions. NKSU and VMU shall support and work towards the renewal and extension of this Agreement to ascertain the continuation of the DDP.

8.3 Violation of both Universities' rules and other institutional regulations regarding academic and ethical behaviour and the non-observance of the study requirements may result in the immediate withdrawal of the Programme.

8.4 Amendments or changes to this Agreement shall be made in writing and signed by the duly authorised representatives of the institutions.

8.5 The Parties agree to solve any dispute arising from the interpretation of this Agreement in a friendly manner.

8.6 In case the dispute cannot be resolved, the claim shall be submitted for arbitration; each Party shall appoint a member of the arbitration panel and one member shall be chosen by mutual consent.

8.7 This Agreement has been signed in two identical originals in English; each institution shall keep one original.

In witness thereof, the parties below have offered their signatures:

For and on behalf of
M. Kozybaev North Kazakhstan
State University, Petropavlovsk,
Republic of Kazakhstan

For and on behalf of
Vytautas Magnus University,
Kaunas, Lithuania

Date: 03.04.2017
Signature:

Prof. Omirbayev Serik Maulenovich,
Rector M. Kozybaev North Kazakhstan
State University

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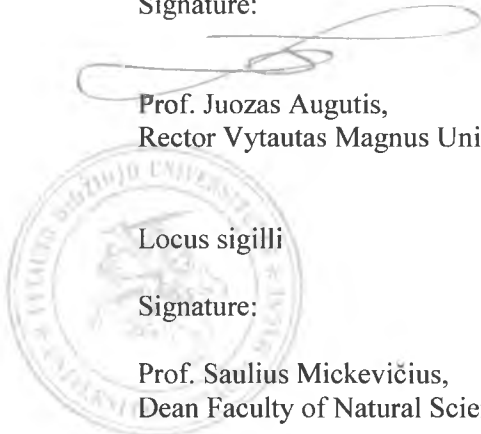
Date:
Signature:

Prof. Juozas Augutis,
Rector Vytautas Magnus University

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Signature:

Prof. Saulius Mickevičius,
Dean Faculty of Natural Science, VMU



APPENDIX 1

1. Courses followed at NKSU and VMU.

All courses amounting to least 60 ECTS credits from two selected specialization areas must be pursued. The remaining courses required to reach the total of 120 ECTS credits shall be selected at VMU.

Courses at NKSU and VMU are enlisted in the following tables.

Courses in NKSU			
No.	Study subject	Study subject code	Credits (ECTS)
1st Semester			
Mandatory courses			
1.	History and Philosophy of Science	HPHS5201	3
2.	Foreign Language (Professional)	FL(P)5202	3
3.	Psychology	Psy5204	3
4.	Pedagogy	Ped5203	3
5.	Cellular Biology	CB5301	3
6.	Scientific Research Work		4
Total			19
Elective courses			
1.	Business Kazakh Language	BKL5205	3
2.	Bases of Animal Ecology	BAE5206	4
3.	Modern Trends of Cyto-histological studies	MTC5210	4
Total			11
Total per semester			30
2nd Semester			
Mandatory courses			
1.	Scientific Research Work		4
Total			4
Elective courses			
1.	Psychogenetics	Psy5302	5
2.	Methods of Histology and Microbiology Research	MHMR5303	5
3.	Hydrobiology and Ichtiology	HI5304	5
4.	Ornithology	Orn5207	3
5.	Modern Methods of Biological Education in High School	MMBE5208	4
6.	Modern Methods of Organization and Hunting Management	MMOH5209	4
Total			26
Total per semester			30
3rd Semester			
Mandatory courses			
1.	Teaching practice		3
2.	Scientific Research Work		4
3.	Research Practice		5
Total			12
Elective courses			
1.	Physiology of Adaptation or Systematics of Plants	PhA/SP6308	5
2.	Bases of Population Ecology or Biology of Ontogenesis	BPE/BO6307	5
3.	Environment and Biodiversity Preservation or Immunology	EBP/Imm6306	5

4.	Ethology or Phytogeography	Eth/Phy6305	3
	Total		18
	Total per semester		30
	4th Semester		
1.	Scientific Research Work		12
2.	Research Practice		7
3.	Complex Examination		4
4.	Issuance and Defence of Master's Thesis		11
	Total per semester		34
	Total for the Programme::		124

Courses in VMU			
No.	Study subject	Study subject code	Credits (ECTS)
	1st Semester		
1.	Molecular Biology	BIO 5001	6
2.	Research work	BIO 5007	6
3.	Genetically modified organisms	BIO 6003	6
4.	Integral analysis of biological systems	BBK 6003	6
5.	Systems biology	BIO 6011	6
	Total per semester		30
	2nd Semester		
1.	Plant biotechnology	BIO 6010	6
2.	Bionanotechnology and biomodeling	BIO 6002	6
	Research Project	BIO 5008	6
	Molecular biotechnology	BIO 5005	6
	Molecular immunogenetics	BIO 5011	6
	Total per semester		30
	3rd Semester		
1.	Molecular Ecology	BIO 6006	6
2.	Molecular laboratory diagnostics	BIO 5009	6
3.	Molecular biology of medical plants	BIO5010	6
4.	Biotechnology for medicine	BIO 6007	6
5.	Scientific professional practice	BIO 6008	6
	Total per semester		30
	4th Semester		
1.	Master Thesis		30
	Total per semester		30
	Total for the Programme::		120

After the completion of both NKSU and VMU programmes, students must have earned no less than 120 ECTS credits.

APPENDIX 2

Curriculum of the Double Diploma Programme and credit transfer mechanism between NKSU and VMU

Courses taken in NKSU and recognized as equivalent in VMU			
Course at NKSU		Course at VMU	
Title	ECTS	Title	ECTS
Mandatory Courses		Molecular Biology	6
History and Philosophy of Science	3	Systems Biology	6
Foreign Language (Professional)	3	Genetically Modified Organisms	6
Psychology	3	Special Course	6
Pedagogy	3	Research Work	6
Cellular Biology	3	Molecular Biotechnology	6
Scientific Research Work	4	Plant Biotechnology	6
Scientific Research Work	4	Molecular Immunogenetics	6
		Bionanotechnology and Biomodeling	6
		Research Project	6
Total	23		
Elective courses			
Bases of Animal Ecology	4		
Business Kazakh Language	3		
Modern Trends of Cyto-histological studies	4		
Psychogenetics	5		
Methods of Histology and Microbiology Research	5		
Hydrobiology and Ichtiology	5		
Ornithology	3		
Modern Methods of Biological Education in High School	4		
Modern Methods of Organization and Hunting Management	4		
Total	37		60
Total in institution	60		60
Courses taken in VMU and recognized as equivalent in NKSU.			
Course at VMU		Course at NKSU	
Title	ECTS	Title	ECTS
Molecular Ecology	6	Mandatory Courses	
Molecular laboratory diagnostics	6	Scientific Research Work	4
Molecular biology of medical plants	6	Teaching practice	3
Biotechnology for medicine	6	Research Practice	5
Scientific professional practice		Total	12
		Elective courses	
		Ethology or Phytogeography	3
		Environment and Biodiversity Preservation or Immunology	5
		Bases of Population Ecology or Biology of Ontogenesis	5
		Physiology of Adaptation or Systematics of Plants	5
		Total	18
Total per semester	30	Total per semester	30
Master thesis equivalence			
VMU	ECTS	NKSU	ECTS

Master Thesis	30	Issuance and Defence of Master's Thesis	11
		Scientific Research Work	12
		Complex Examination	4
		Research Practice	7
Total per semester	30	Total per semester	34
Total in institution	60	Total in institution	64