



Ollscoil na hÉireann  
National University of Ireland

# NUI Policy & Procedure: Notification of new programmes





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Front cover inset image from NUI's murals (c.1820).  
Read more about the murals in our digital booklet:  
[https://www.nui.ie/mural\\_paintings/mural\\_paintings.html](https://www.nui.ie/mural_paintings/mural_paintings.html).

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## 1 Context

Collaborative provision, transnational provision and joint awards continue to proliferate in NUI constituent universities and recognised colleges. This is particularly evident in the context of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area, but also includes more extensive international collaborations.

NUI Senate and the Committee of NUI Registrars have agreed that a policy formalising the (existing) process of notifying NUI of new programmes should be established. The timing of certain elements of that process regarding parchment production and graduate data is a key concern.

## 2 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish clear policy and procedure in support of NUI Statute 263 and Section 47(v) of the Universities Act, 1997, and to ensure NUI meets its statutory obligations in relation to the Seanad Electoral (University Members) Act, 1937.

It is intended that this policy and procedure will enable clear and efficient communication between member institutions<sup>1</sup> and the NUI Administration. It will detail the requirements of the NUI from its member institutions in order to produce parchments, including collaborative parchments. It will also address the restrictions that may be necessary in order to maintain the quality of the document and transparent record keeping.

## 3 Principles

- 3.1 Member institutions will give advance notice of new programmes to the NUI Registrar to facilitate planning and resourcing, where appropriate.
- 3.2 NUI will support member institutions as far as possible, with due regard to practical constraints of the data management and parchment production systems (e.g. titles on parchments are subject to character limits).

1. Member institutions is used to refer collectively to all institutions in the federation - both constituent universities and recognised colleges, including designated awarding bodies and linked providers.

- 3.3 NUI parchments are produced only for awards that are placed on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Parchments are not produced for CPD or other short courses, including microcredentials, that do not lead to an NUI award.
- 3.4 Standard NUI parchments will be monolingual or bilingual. Bilingual parchments will contain the full text of the parchment in both languages; parchments will not have multiple languages or partial translations.
- 3.5 Joint awards delivered by more than one NUI institution will have a single, agreed course code.
- 3.6 All programmes leading to NUI awards, including awards jointly awarded with third party institutions, will have agreements for the sharing of graduate data with NUI.
- 3.7 This policy is complementary to NUI's *Policy on the Titling of Degrees and Other Qualifications*.

## 4 NUI Awards: Parchments and Data Arrangements

As a federal university, all awards made by the member institutions are awards of the National University of Ireland. For the designated awarding bodies (DABs) in the federation, awards are technically joint awards of NUI and the relevant DAB.

For the purposes of this policy, a 'standard NUI award' includes all those awarded by NUI only<sup>2</sup> or by a single member institution and NUI and no other institutions.

- A 'joint award' in the context of this policy refers to the following awards:
- an award made by NUI and a partner institution from **outside** the federation
  - an award made by NUI and **more than one** NUI member institution
  - an award made by NUI, a member institution(s) and one or more partner institutions **outside** the federation.

2. This is the case for linked providers where NUI is the sole awarding body.

## 4.1 Standard NUI Awards

### 4.1.1 Parchments for Standard NUI Awards

NUI produces all parchments for awards conferred by NUI member institutions where the award is placed on the NFQ. Depending on the type of award, there is usually 1-4 years before the first conferring of a cohort from a new programme takes place. Because of the volume of parchments produced during the busy conferring season, it is imperative that NUI receives information about new programmes requiring parchments at the earliest opportunity. For example, non-major awards tend to have longer titles but there is a character limit for award titles due to the parchment templates and this should be considered prior to formal approval at an institutional level. (See Section 5.1 for a checklist of key information.)

### 4.1.2 Graduate Data for Standard NUI Awards

Typically, graduate data is shared with NUI via conferring offices (or equivalent) in the member institutions.

Information is required for all students who have passed the required examinations leading to an NUI qualification and who are **eligible** for conferring.

Student data should be submitted by member institutions to NUI in an excel file (the exact file format will be circulated to those responsible for data management within those institutions).

Complete files must be submitted 3 weeks in advance of the conferring date.

## 4.2 Joint Awards with Institutions outside the Federation

### 4.2.1 Parchments for Joint Awards

In the case of collaborative programmes and joint awards, there are three possible scenarios for the production of parchments:

1. An NUI member institution is the lead partner and responsible for production of the parchment.
2. A third-party institution is the lead partner and responsible for production of the parchment.

3. Exceptionally, both/all parties in a joint award have responsibility for producing parchments.

Where an NUI member institution is responsible for producing a parchment (1 and 3 above), NUI will produce the parchment. NUI should be informed in due time to prepare parchment templates and liaise with a designated point of contact in the lead institution to obtain the required crests, seals and digital signatures for all partner institutions. As for standard NUI awards, it is very helpful for NUI to have this information early in the life cycle of a new programme.

Where an NUI institution is a partner but **not** the lead partner and the parchment is to be produced by an institution outside the federation, NUI must be informed about the award and will share high quality image files of the relevant crests, seals and signatures directly with the responsible institution. In such cases, NUI will not have the capability of or the responsibility for the production of duplicate documentation to graduates; this must rest with the responsible partner institution (generally, the lead partner).

In **all cases**, appropriate arrangements must be made for NUI graduate data to be shared with NUI.

### 4.2.2 Graduate Data for Joint Awards

All degrees and qualifications of NUI constituent universities are qualifications of NUI (Statute 263). All degrees and qualifications of NUI recognised colleges (whether a designated awarding body or a linked provider) are qualifications of NUI. The graduates of all joint programmes awarded by an NUI member institution are graduates of NUI and must be recorded on the NUI Graduate Register. This is the case regardless of whether NUI is producing the parchments for the award.

Data sharing agreements should be incorporated into all partnership agreements.

Where NUI is producing parchments for a joint award, data will be shared in the same way as for standard awards (as outlined in 4.1.2 above).

Where NUI is not producing parchments for a joint award, the graduate data should be submitted by the designated NUI member institution to NUI in an excel file (the exact file format will be circulated to those responsible for data management within that institution) within 3 weeks of the conferring date. The onus for timely sharing of graduate data in this instance is on the designated NUI member institution.

## 5 Procedure for Notifying NUI of New Standard Awards

### 5.1 Key Information

#### Programme information:

- Type of award
- Level of award on the Irish NFQ
- Title of award (i.e. what should appear on the parchment/certificate)
- Institutional course code
- Commencement date for programme

#### Parchment information:

- Expected first conferring of award
- Estimated number of annual graduates
- Parchment language

### 5.2 Process

NUI will ensure that a form (electronic or wholly online) is available to member institutions for completion by the academic secretary, or equivalent, in the member institution. For member institutions, it may be most efficient to integrate this process into the activity of academic council (or equivalent) but local implementation is a matter for individual institutions.

### 5.3 Timeline

NUI request that member institutions complete the form to provide the information outlined in Section 5.1 above just prior to final internal approval. NUI can advise regarding character length of award titles in advance of final approval.

Completion of the form would satisfy the NUI statute requiring constituent universities to inform the NUI Registrar of new programmes leading to NUI qualifications, where no material changes are made subsequently.

## 6 Procedure for Notifying NUI of New Joint Awards

### 6.1 Key Information

#### Programme information:

- Type of award
- Level of award on the Irish NFQ
- Title of award (max 118 characters including spaces)
- Institutional course code<sup>3</sup>
- Commencement date for programme
- Expected first conferring of award
- Estimated number of annual graduates
- Parchment language
- Standard/joint award (double-checking not a standard award)

#### Parchment information:

- Institution responsible for parchment production
- Point of contact for NUI parchment artefacts (crest, seal, signature)

#### Data information:

- Agreement in place for sharing of graduate data with NUI institution?

### 6.2 Process

NUI will ensure that a form (electronic or wholly online) is available to member institutions for completion by the academic secretary, or equivalent, in the member institution. For member institutions, it may be most efficient to integrate this process into the activity of academic council (or equivalent), but local implementation is a matter for individual institutions.

3. Where more than one NUI member institution is awarding the collaborative award, a single code must be agreed between the NUI institutions.

### 6.3 Timeline

For the purposes of ensuring parchment and data sharing arrangements are in order, NUI requests that member institutions inform NUI of new collaborative/joint programmes before a memorandum of agreement/understanding has been signed (in case minor adjustments are required).

### 6.4 Parchment Production

If NUI is to produce the parchment for a collaborative award, NUI will need the following from the relevant NUI institution (or contact in the lead institution):

- Number of partner institutions
- Full legal names of partner institutions
- Names of signatories for partner institutions
- Crests and/or seals and digital signatures from partner institutions in high quality resolution, min. 300 dpi, in TIFF or jpeg format.
- The proposed format of joint degree parchments (in compliance with spacing and character limitations stipulated by NUI).

## 7 Sharing the NUI Crests, Seals and Signatures with Third Parties

For parchment production by a third-party institution, NUI will transfer the approved crest, seal and digital signatures for NUI directly with the nominated point of contact in the responsible institution.

NUI crests, seals and signatures will be shared securely with the understanding that they will only be used for that specific purpose and cannot be used for any other documentation issued without the agreement of NUI.

# Appendix 1 – Sample forms for new awards



## Notification of new Standard Award

*Please note, this form should be completed prior to final (internal) approval of your new programme.*

### Programme Information

Type of award	
Level of award on Irish NFQ	Note: award must be on the NFQ
Title of award (i.e. what should appear on the parchment/ certificate)*	
Exit award(s)	
Institutional course code(s)	
Commencement date for programme	
Please confirm this award is not a collaborative/joint award (use separate form for collaborative/joint awards)	yes / no

### Parchment Information

Expected first conferring of award	
Estimated number of annual graduates	
Parchment language	

\*Note: titles should be no longer than 118 characters including spaces



## Notification of new Collaborative/Joint Award

Please note, this form should be completed **before** an MOU has been signed and before progressing for approval within your institution.

### Programme Information

Type of award	
Level of award on Irish NFQ	
Title of award (i.e. what should appear on the parchment/certificate)	
Exit Award Title(s)	
Institutional course code(s)	
Commencement date for programme	
Please confirm this award is a <b>collaborative/joint</b> award (use separate form for standard awards)	yes/no

### Parchment Information

Is your institution the lead partner?	Yes/no
Will NUI be responsible for producing the parchments?	Yes/no
IF YES: Expected first conferring of award	
IF YES: Estimated number of annual graduates	
IF YES: Parchment language	
IF NO: Institution responsible for parchment production	
IF NO: Point of contact for NUI parchment artefacts (crest, seal, signatures) in partner institution	

### Graduate Data Information

Will your institution control all the graduate data?	yes/no
IF YES: arrangements for standard awards apply, but deadline is three weeks following conferral date	
IF NO: Have you a data sharing agreement in place with the lead institution to facilitate submission of graduate data to NUI?	
IF NO: Who is the institutional contact for graduate data?	conferring office/other?

\*Note: titles should be no longer than 118 characters including spaces



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