

## AGREEMENT ON A DOUBLE DIPLOMA PROGRAMME ON BIOLOGY

between

**Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas, Lithuania),**  
represented by Professor Julija Kirėienė, Vice-Rector  
(K. Donelainio g. 58, LT-44248, Kaunas, Lithuania),

and

**Vasyľ Stus Donetsk National University (Vinnytsia, Ukraine),**  
represented by Professor Grynyuk Roman, Rector  
(21021, 600-richchya 21, Vinnytsia, Ukraine)

### 1. PREAMBLE

In the spirit of prolific international relations and academic cooperation, Vytautas Magnus University (hereinafter referred to as “VMU”) and the Vasyľ Stus Donetsk National University (hereinafter referred to as “Vasyľ Stus DonNU”) wish to strengthen their ties further, in accordance with their mutual interests in delivering programmes of academic excellence and cultural diversity. Hence, Vasyľ Stus DonNU 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 Vasyľ Stus DonNU to facilitate credit transfer and provide a smooth transition of students from Vasyľ Stus DonNU to VMU in order for them to obtain VMU Master’s degree in Molecular biology and Vasyľ Stus DonNU Master’s degree in Biology. The Agreement is in compliance with both, the Law on Higher Education and Research of Republic of the Lithuania and the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Ukraine.

### 2. SCOPE OF COOPERATION

This Agreement delineates the legal and organizational framework for the DDP. The programme will provide the opportunity to graduate students from Vasyľ Stus DonNU to simultaneously pursue the Master’s degree in Molecular biology from VMU and Master’s degree in Biology from Vasyľ Stus DonNU, 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 Vasyľ Stus DonNU 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:

Vasyľ Stus DonNU

- *Master in Biology (Programme in 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 Double Degree Programme in accordance with the conditions set forth in this Agreement.

3.2 VMU shall assist the incoming Double Degree 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 Vasyl' Stus DonNU in accordance with the selection criteria jointly defined and agreed upon by Vasyl' Stus DonNU and VMU. The selection of the participants in the DDP will be based on:

- Transcript of student's records with his/her courses and grades;
- Letter of confirmation from the sending institution;
- Language proficiency certificate;
- Other requirements set between the partner institutions;
- For students from Vasyl' Stus DonNU as the sending institution, the required English level is B1<sup>1</sup> 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 Vasyl' Stus DonNU for academic rationales or any other substantial reason that has occurred during the joint selection process, but is obliged to motivate this rejection.

4.4 Both VMU and Vasyl' Stus DonNU 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 Vasyl' Stus DonNU to select the candidates. Joint selection interviews by Vasyl' Stus DonNU and VMU are encouraged.

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<sup>1</sup> According to CEF, B1 level refers to a threshold or intermediate level.

- 4.5 The courses shall be taught in English in VMU during the study years.
- 4.6 Within the programme, the degrees of Vasyl' Stus DonNU 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 Vasyl' Stus DonNU. The separate management of two degrees also enables the student to quit the Double Degree Programme and continue his/ her studies in the Vasyl' Stus DonNU 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 Vasyl' Stus DonNU 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 Double Degree Programme in both institutions.
- 4.8 According to the rules prevailing in each institution, students may receive an honourable mention, if they fulfil the requirements.
- 4.9. The diploma awarded by Vasyl' Stus DonNU shall be issued in Ukrainian and 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 and Vasyl' Stus DonNU.

## **5. ~ STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME**

- 5.1 The structure of the Double Degree Master's Programme both at Vasyl' Stus DonNU and VMU is provided in Appendix 1 of this Agreement.
- 5.2 The equivalent courses of the Double Diploma Master's Programme both at Vasyl' Stus DonNU 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). The first semester shall be taught in Vasyl' Stus DonNU, for the second semester studies students shall come to VMU. The third semester shall be taught in Vasyl' Stus DonNU. In order to meet requirements for Double Degree the students are required to complete fourth semester in VMU and complete their master thesis.
- 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 master thesis at VMU might take the form of a written academic paper in English. The 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 VMU.
- 6.4 Students from Vasyl' Stus DonNU who are coming for the fourth semester to VMU to complete their DDP, must be completed their master of Biology program at Vasyl' Stus DonNU.

## **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), books, equipment, consumables, health insurance, a student union fee (if applicable) and other expenses arising out of the exchange.
- 7.2 The students shall cover the tuition fees for the study period in the sending institution (Vasyl' Stus DonNU) according to the study costs and regulations of Vasyl' Stus DonNU.
- 7.3 Students shall pay the study fee in VMU for the period studied here.
- 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. Vasyl' Stus DonNU 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

Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University,  
Vinnytsia, Ukraine

Date:  
Signature:



Prof. Grigoriy Roman,  
Rector Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University

For and on behalf of

Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

Date:  
Signature:



Prof. Julija Kiršienė,  
Vice-Rector Vytautas Magnus University

## APPENDIX 1

## 1. Courses followed at Vasyl' Stus DonNU 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 of in the field of biology at Vasyl' Stus DonNU and VMU are enlisted in the following tables.

Courses in Vasyl' Stus DonNU		
Course title	Code	ECTS
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Semester</b>		
Labour Protection (Profession-oriented Study) and Civil Defence		3,5
Ontogenesis Mechanisms		3,5
Historical Development of Biological System		3
Populations Biology		5
Adaptogenesis in biological system		3,5
Cytogenetics Basics of Organisms Development		6
Methodology of Teaching of Biology and Chemistry in Higher School / Bioethics and Biosafety		5,5
		<b>30</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Semester</b>		
Intellectual Property in byology		3,5
Systems Biology		6,5
Phytosozology		3
Molecular Genetics		3
Molecular Physiology / Functional biochemistry		6
Special Course (chosen by the student)		8
		<b>30</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Semester</b>		
Practical Training		4,5
Scientific Research Training		4,5
Fulfillment of Master's Work		15
State Attestation		6
		<b>30</b>
<b>Total ECTS</b>		<b>90</b>

Courses in VMU			
No.	Study subject	Study subject code	Credits (ECTS)
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Semester</b>			
1.	Molecular Biology	BIO 5001	6
2.	Research work	BIO 5007	6
3.	Molecular Ecology	BIO 6006	6
4.	Molecular laboratory diagnostics	BIO 5009	6
5.	Biotechnology for medicine	BIO 6007	6

	<b>Total per semester</b>		<b>30</b>
	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Semester</b>		
1.	Molecular biotechnology	BIO 5005	6
2.	Bionanotechnology and biomodeling	BIO 5008	6
3.	Molecular immunogenetics	BIO 5011	6
4.	Research project	BIO 5008	6
5.	Molecular methods in forensic medicine	BIO 5009	6
	<b>Total per semester</b>		<b>30</b>
	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Semester</b>		
1.	Genetically modified organisms	BIO 6003	6
2.	Integral analysis of biological systems	BBK 6003	6
3.	Systems biology	BIO 6011	6
4.	Scientific professional practice	BIO 6008	6
5.	Plant biotechnology	BIO 6010	6
	<b>Total per semester</b>		<b>30</b>
	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Semester</b>		
1.	Master Thesis		<b>30</b>
	<b>Total per semester</b>		<b>30</b>
	<b>Total for the Programme::</b>		<b>120</b>

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

## APPENDIX 2

### Curriculum of the Double Degree Programme and credit transfer mechanism between Vasyľ Stus DonNU and VMU

#### Equivalences between Vasyľ Stus DonNU and VMU courses

Course at Vasyľ Stus DonNU		Course at VMU	
	Title	ECTS	ECTS
<b>I semester</b>	Labour Protection (Profession-oriented Study) and Civil Defence	3,5	6
	Ontogenesis Mechanisms	3,5	6
	Historical Development of Biological System	3	6
	Populations Biology	5	6
	Adaptogenesis in biological system	3,5	6
	Cytogenetics Basics of Organisms Development	6	
	Methodology of Teaching of Biology and Chemistry in Higher School / Bioethics and Biosafety	5,5	
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>II semester</b>	Intellectual Property in biology	3,5	6
	Systems Biology	6,5	6
	Phytosozology	3	6
	Molecular Genetics	3	
	Molecular Physiology / Functional biochemistry	6	6
	Special Course (chosen by the student)	8	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>III semester</b>	Practical Training	4,5	6
	Fulfillment of Master's Work	15	6
	Scientific Research Training	4,5	6
	State Attestation	6	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>IV semester</b>			30
<b>Total</b>			<b>30</b>
<b>Total in institution</b>		<b>90</b>	<b>120</b>