



THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH GUIDANCE FOR JOINTLY AWARDED PhD PROGRAMMES

INTRODUCTION

Joint PhD programmes enable doctoral students to embark on jointly-supervised research degrees which should considerably enhance their research experience and employment opportunities on an international scale. The benefits for students on jointly-awarded PhD programmes include access to two research environments and cultures as well as access to the training and facilities of two research-intensive universities. The schemes have the potential not only to increase PhD student headcount (although not necessarily Full Time Equivalent) and the outputs associated with PhD students i.e. publications, conference attendances, thesis production but also to strengthen our collaborative research activities with partners worldwide beyond the duration of a PhD programme.

The University of Edinburgh (UoE) and a partner university can create a tailor-made programme of study for each student, taking individual research needs into account.

UoE participates in several jointly awarded PhD programmes listed at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/collaborative-activity/collaborative-agreements>

UoE is also receptive to establishing new joint PhD programmes providing the due diligence procedures are followed as outlined below.

TERMINOLOGY

Joint doctoral programmes can take several forms, the most common model being the double (co-tutelle) degree model, although this is changing and fully-integrated joint doctoral programmes are becoming increasingly common. The UoE has taken the strategic decision to support ONLY the development of fully integrated joint degrees i.e., degrees for which there is a single award between partner Universities recognising each other's quality assurance, standards, and examination procedures. This is a clear move away from the model of double (co-tutelle) degrees which support the award of two (or more) degrees from partner universities upon joint supervision of the same piece of research. Double degrees are not permitted under UoE Postgraduate Assessment Regulations 2.3 'Theses must not include work submitted for any other degree or professional qualification'.

http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Regulations/PGR_AssessmentRegulations.PDF

The objective is to award research students a single joint PhD degree for a programme of collaborative research undertaken at two institutions, thus fostering stronger academic links between the partner institutions.

In accordance with the UoE's current agreements these guidelines refer solely to jointly-awarded PhD degrees and not double degree agreements. In this context, the following definition of jointly awarded PhDs has been agreed:

A jointly-awarded PhD is a qualification conferred upon a student on completion of a collaborative programme established by the partner institutions. It is characterised by:

- Meeting the academic requirements of both universities.
- Agreement regarding the nomination of a lead university. This concept is one of the pillars of the agreements which the UoE participates in. This will determine rules and regulations on a “by-default” basis enabling the doctoral candidate to know which governance structure prevails should difficulties arise.
- Joint supervision of students between nominated and qualified staff at doctoral degree-awarding institutions.
- A single degree awarded for one PhD thesis recognised by both institutions.
- Parchment(s) issued which indicate that there has been joint supervision.

HOW JOINT PHD PROGRAMMES OPERATE

A mutually satisfactory overarching Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for jointly awarded PhDs is first agreed between UoE and the partner universities, and signed and approved at University level. It is important to agree high level priorities before the specifics of individual student-specific agreements are examined. In large networks of universities this MOU is multilateral and this model allows flexibility between institutions and nations with regard to rules and regulations.

The participation of individual students on a jointly-awarded doctoral programme is then agreed by partner universities on a case-by-case basis, and a separate student-specific Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is drawn up.

MOU and MOA templates have been developed that can be customised for any appropriate joint PhD programme as follows:

1. An overarching, generic, non-legally binding MOU for a jointly awarded PhD Programme.
2. An individual student-specific bilateral MOA detailing, as a minimum, arrangements for:
 - Responsibility for the administration of the jointly awarded PhD programme.
 - Registration/matriculation.
 - Payment of fees (tuition, examination, research costs) and funding arrangements.
 - Social security and insurance.
 - Duration of study at each location.
 - Coursework.
 - Intellectual property rights.
 - Supervision and quality assurance procedure.
 - Examination of the thesis, consistent with the normal practices of the awarding institutions.
 - Graduation.

FUNDING & FINANCE

A student can apply for scholarships from either or both Universities but will only be eligible at any one time to be in receipt of a full scholarship from one of the Partner Universities. A student may also have external funding or self-fund.

Funding arrangements (including self-funding elements) to support the jointly supervised PhD student must be clearly defined in the MOA. Accepting students as participants on the programme is entirely a School/College decision based, amongst other things, on their ability to provide appropriate supervision and funding. Schools are free to participate in a jointly-awarded PhD programme or not depending on what is considered to be academically appropriate and financially possible. Schools are responsible for securing funds unless a student is able to self-fund or has external funding. The jointly-awarded PhD will be based on a maximum period of registration of 4 years although funding arrangements will be for a period of 3 years. In exceptional cases, and only if required, arrangements for continuation/extension funding may be set up between the partner universities as per existing regulations applicable to all PhD students.

REVIEW OF COLLABORATIVE PROVISION AND JOINTLY AWARDED PHD PROGRAMMES

The arrangements for Collaborative Provision are reviewed on a periodic basis, recommended review at three years or an interim review at the request of the collaborating Universities, and a date for renewal/ending with a recommended initial period of five years. In similar manner, it is recommended that the Jointly Awarded PhD Programmes should be subject to review at regular points throughout the lifetime of the MOA.

PROCESS FOR THE APPROVAL OF JOINTLY AWARDED PHD PROGRAMMES

Joint PhD programmes can be initiated either by either the PhD Supervisors or by prospective research students (both hereafter known as the “Initiator”).

A prospective research student may approach PhD Supervisors and a joint PhD project may be proposed tailored to suit the student. If the proposal is initiated by the student, all eligibility criteria must be met and the PhD Supervisors of the collaborating universities must confirm acceptance of the student’s proposal in writing.

At this initial stage, consideration should be given to the long-term viability of a new agreement and the initial administrative input required for setting up and maintaining the joint PhD programme. In addition, consideration should be given to a student funding check. Will student self-fund? The Initiator should check scholarship application deadlines if appropriate and ascertain if pro-rata tuition fees and research costs are covered? (See Funding and Finance section on page 3)

If the joint PhD programme is initiated by a PhD Supervisor then the approved joint PhD programme is advertised and competitive recruitment takes place.

In setting up a jointly awarded PhD the following steps should be followed:

Step 1 – Does a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) exist?

The PhD Supervisor should establish at an early stage whether or not a jointly awarded PhD MOU already exists between the prospective partner universities. Refer to the Collaborative Programmes Repository held by the UoE Governance and Strategic Planning office on <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/collaborative-activity>. If a MOU does exist, proceed to Step 4, if not, proceed to Step 2.

Step 2 – Due Diligence

If no jointly awarded PhD MOU already exists, the PhD Supervisor carries out Due Diligence, in order to establish that the Partner University’s quality assurance and governance are of an equitable standard to those of the University of Edinburgh (UoE). The minimum requirement for Due Diligence is the inclusion of PhD completion rates, PhD supervision policy and PhD training arrangements.

Step 3 – New Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/GaSP/Restricted/EDlan/Collab/Templates/Jointly_Awarded_PhD_Memorandum_of_Understanding_Template_201109.pdf

1. All University Partnerships are approved by Vice Principal External Engagement.
2. The MOU is produced by the PhD Supervisor (advice may be sought from a number of sources, the relevant College Postgraduate Office, the International Office, Governance and Strategic Policy and Academic Services, if required. (See useful contacts on page 7)) It is sent to the

appropriate College/School Committee or Head for approval. Seek advice from the College Office as to which is the most appropriate approval route.

3. The College/School Committee or Head either rejects the MOU and returns it to the PhD Supervisor, or approves and sends it to the Vice Principal External Engagement and Vice Principal International for endorsement.
4. A Lead University and a Partner University are established.
5. The office of the Vice Principal External Engagement should ensure that a copy of the signed MOU is lodged with GaSP (for inclusion in the Repository) and the International Office (see Useful Contacts on page 7).

Step 4 – Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

A more detailed joint PhD project proposal is then developed taking into account academic and administrative arrangements which are detailed in the student-specific MOA.

1. The MOA is prepared, agreed and signed by the identified PhD Supervisor/s of each University in conjunction with the student, in consultation with Schools/College Postgraduate Offices.
2. The MOA is formally approved by the College and School (either by the Head or the appropriate Committee) and sent to the Vice Principal External Engagement and Vice Principal International for endorsement.
3. One copy of the MOA is sent to Student Admissions and Curricula Systems (SACS) in Academic Registry (See useful contacts on page 7) by the office of Vice Principal External Engagement. This will ensure that the appropriate tuition fee is charged on student registration.
4. One copy of MOA is sent to GaSP. (See useful contacts on page 7) for inclusion in the Repository of Jointly Awarded PhDs.
5. GaSP sends the MOA to the Principal for sign off.
6. Once the MOA has been signed off, a formal Offer can be made to the student by UoE. The PhD Supervisor of the Lead University must ensure that student has also received an offer from the Partner University.

Step 5 – Application, Offer and Admission

The student may formally apply for admission to both Lead and Partner Universities at the initial setting up stage (At UoE this is via EUCLID to a standard PhD programme) or the student can also wait until the MOA is agreed and then apply.

1. The PhD Supervisor, in conjunction with College Postgraduate Offices, will ensure that timely application is made to the College/School for a Certificate of Acceptance for Studies (CAS), <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/international-office/immigration/home>
2. The formal Offer of Admission to the student from both the Lead and Partner Universities should refer to the MOA which forms part of the terms of the student's contract with the Universities.

3. A copy of the Lead University formal Offer Letter should be forwarded to the Partner University by either the College Office or the School Postgraduate Office and the Lead University should receive a copy of the formal Offer Letter from the Partner University.
4. A Specific EUCLID Programme of Study (POS) Code for the Jointly Awarded PhD is set up by the College/ School as outlined in their Admissions process.
5. If the student already holds a conditional offer for a standard PhD, then the registration is transferred to the new POS Code.
6. The student must complete the registration procedures for Lead and Partner Universities in order to be a fully matriculated student for the total duration of the period of PhD study. Students will be included in the statistical information on student numbers compiled by both Universities.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS, DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

Administering University is the university which takes the lead on the administrative aspects of a collaborative programme, e.g. recruitment, admissions, collection of tuition fees. (See Lead University)

Awarding institution is a university or other higher education institution empowered to award degrees, diplomas, certificates or credits by virtue of authority given to it by statute, Royal Charter, or the Privy Council, or under licence from another authorised body. In the UK, it is the institution whose academic award is the award to which a programme of study leads. There may be more than one awarding institution when a programme is a joint collaboration.

Due Diligence is a reasonable investigation, undertaken prior to the decision to collaborate, into the quality assurance and governance of a prospective partner university. The investigation provides the University of Edinburgh with information on the suitability of another university or institution to inform the decision to collaborate.

A jointly-awarded PhD is a qualification conferred upon a student on completion of a collaborative programme established by the partner institutions.

Lead University is the University which is responsible for the overall administration of the student's work and the examination process. Regarding the different nomenclatures for PhD degrees in different places, the lead University shall determine the nomenclature adopted for the jointly awarded PhD degree. The Lead University might also be known as the Administering University

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a preliminary agreement which expresses an intention to cooperate with another organisation but does not commit the University to a specific collaborative programme. A commitment to a specific activity is the subject of a separate agreement (MOA).

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is a legally binding document between the University of Edinburgh and partner universities/institutions setting out the terms and conditions for the collaborative provision.

Quality assurance is the means through which an institution ensures and confirms that the conditions are in place for students to achieve the standards set by it or by another awarding body.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Memorandum of Understanding and Memorandum of Agreement templates available at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/collaborative-activity/develop-new-guidelines>

For further advice contact:

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To lodge a new jointly-awarded PhD programme MOU Contact:

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Contact address for Student Admissions and Curricula Systems (SACS) Send copy of MoA to:

Student Admissions and Curricula Systems (SACS)
Academic Registry
Old College
Edinburgh