




# Guidelines for the establishment of joint PhD degree award or double/dual PhD degree award with IUA Universities

# Introduction



**A** strategic objective of the Irish Universities Association (IUA) is to build engagement locally, nationally and internationally<sup>1</sup>. IUA member Universities support the establishment of collaborative arrangements with international University partners for our PhD Researchers through interinstitutional co-supervision leading to a joint PhD degree or dual/double PhD degree awarded to the student. However, an informal joint supervision arrangement where the PhD Researcher is awarded their PhD degree from their home institution, is deemed the legitimate and preferred mechanism of collaboration with international partner universities.

A joint PhD degree or dual/double PhD degree arrangement allows a PhD Researcher to complete a doctoral PhD degree at two universities in two different countries. It results in one PhD degree award on the basis of a single academic contribution (i.e. doctoral thesis) produced as a result of research undertaken at two different institutions.

IUA member Universities will support the establishment of a joint PhD degree or dual/double PhD degree arrangement with an international partner if there is legitimate strategic benefit to the University e.g. there is external funding associated with putting the agreement in place, to underpin an existing collaboration or facilitate a future collaboration. Each IUA University has their own regulations and requirements and this document outlines common elements for establishing an interinstitutional co-supervision arrangement between an IUA University and their international partner.

In brief, embarking on a joint PhD degree or dual/double PhD degree will require the initiating parties to cooperate in compiling a student-specific Interinstitutional Agreement that will cover all elements of the PhD Researcher's PhD programme from their admission to both institutions through to graduation and this agreement must comply to the academic regulations of both partners.

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1 | <https://www.iua.ie/ourwork/internationalisation/>

**Each IUA University has their own regulations and requirements but the following document outlines common elements of establishing an interinstitutional co-supervision arrangement between an IUA University and their international partner.**

# Glossary of Terms

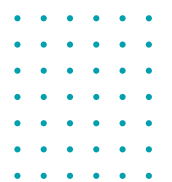
## **I**nformal Joint Supervision:

A PhD Researcher is admitted to and graduates from a home institution, and may engage in research activities at a partner institution as a visiting student. There normally should be a written agreement outlining the supervisory arrangements. A supervisor from a partner institution can be nominated to the supervision team in the student's home institution, the award is from the home institution.

## **Cotutelle:**

In the Irish context, the term 'cotutelle' is understood as a model of co-supervision of a PhD Researcher ranging from informal agreements to formalised inter-institutional models leading to joint or dual/double awards where they submit a single doctoral dissertation for a single examination leading to a joint PhD degree or dual/double PhD degree award.





### **Joint PhD Degree:**

A PhD Researcher receives joint supervision within an IUA University and an international partner institution, and submits a single doctoral dissertation for a single examination. One award is recognised by issuance of one parchment usually by the lead institution, normally referencing the partner institution. The arrangements underpinning a joint PhD award are based on a formal inter-institutional agreement authorised at the appropriate level in each institution and identifying the relevant 'lead' institution.

### **Dual/Double PhD Degree Award:**

'Dual' and 'Double' PhD degree award are understood by the IUA Universities as one and the same i.e. when a PhD Researcher receives joint supervision within an IUA University and international partner institution and submits a single doctoral dissertation for a single examination agreed between the participating institutions, this is recognised through 2 parchments, of equal value, one from each institution normally with reference to each other. The arrangements underpinning a joint PhD award are based on a formal inter-institutional agreement authorised at the appropriate level in each institution.

### **Note:**

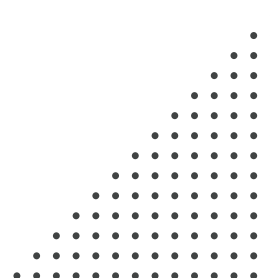
*For ease of reading, the term Joint PhD Degree Award will be referred to for the remainder of this document and the term encompasses the dual/double PhD degree award since all guidelines re common to both, other than the issuance of the parchments*

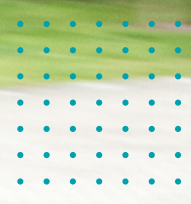
### **Parchment:**

A parchment is a document confirming official completion of a degree award and is normally presented to a graduate at the degree award conferral ceremony. A parchment is different from an academic record because it does not list individual elements of the programme.

### **Student Transcript/Academic Record:**

The student's academic record is maintained and issued by the lead institution. There can be a transcript from both partners.





# Scope

- An informal joint supervision arrangement is deemed the legitimate and preferred mechanism for collaboration between IUA member universities and their international partner or necessary by the relevant IUA member. A joint PhD degree should only be embarked upon if deemed strategically important.
- An IUA interinstitutional co-supervisory arrangement refers exclusively to the co-supervision of a PhD Researcher between an IUA member University and their international partner Institution. Where deemed strategic, such co-supervision can lead to a joint PhD degree award. Joint PhD degrees with national Higher Education Institutions are not in scope.
- While the European Doctorate<sup>2</sup> is accepted in at least one IUA University it is out of scope of this guide.
- This Guidelines document does not refer to a cohort of PhD Researchers on a collaborative graduate research programme. This is covered by the IUA Guidelines for establishing collaborative PhD degree programmes<sup>3</sup>.

# Principles

- A Joint PhD degree infers that there is only one examination of the PhD candidate that meets the PhD degree awarding requirements of both institutions.
- Embarking on a Joint PhD degree will require a detailed agreement to be compiled that addresses all elements of the student's PhD programme from their admission through to their graduation and the articles in such an agreement must comply with the academic regulations of both institutions.
- Any proposed joint arrangement will need prior approval by the University Dean of Graduate Studies or equivalent.
- The agreement must be negotiated **prior** to the PhD Researcher registering at either the Irish or the international partner institution. A joint PhD degree arrangement will not be negotiated if the student is already on a PhD programme.
- A PhD Researcher on a Joint PhD degree arrangement must spend a minimum period of time in-person at one of the partner institutions subject to the regulations of the IUA University.

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2 | A European doctorate is a label appended in the diploma of a doctoral candidate approved by the home university, having: i) carried out a (small) part of the research work at another European university; ii) the manuscript of the thesis reviewed by two professors belonging to two other European countries/universities; iii) at least one member of the jury coming from another European country/university; iv) a part of the defence done in an EU official languages, different from the one(s) of the country where the thesis defence takes place. These principles were agreed during a meeting of the Confederation of European Rectors in Salamanca in 1991 and they are used informally. This label has no special legal value in the EU and it is the responsibility of universities to define criteria for delivering this title.

3 | <https://www.iua.ie/publications/iua-guidelines-for-establishing-collaborative-research-PhD-degree-programmes-2021/>

# Process Flowchart

## Step 1:

Potential partnership examined to determine if aligned to strategic plan of the IUA University

Due diligence requirements carried out

Approval in principle for proposal from Dean of Graduate studies or equivalent

## Step 2:

Execution of interinstitutional agreements defining the co-supervisory arrangements

All parties sign agreement

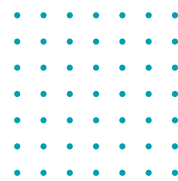
PhD Researcher admitted to the universities

Programme proceeds and candidate is successful in examination

Issuance of degree parchment(s) in line with the agreement



# Steps



## Step 1. Strategic Case:

Parties interested in establishing a Joint PhD degree arrangement for an individual PhD Researcher must submit a proposal to the relevant university committee in the IUA University. Only when the proposal is approved by the IUA university committee can an agreement proceed to be drafted.

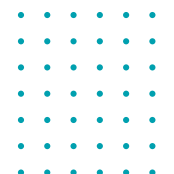
Once approved in principle, a specific inter-institutional co-supervisory agreement must be agreed that describes all aspects of the co-supervisory arrangements, the formal progression of the student through the programme and the outcomes required in the award of the PhD degree(s).

## Step 2. Inter-institutional Agreement:

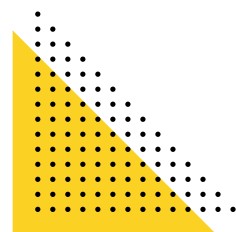
- **PhD degree Type:** It must be stated whether the PhD degree will be a joint PhD degree award i.e. 1 parchment issued by the lead University or dual/double PhD degree where each partner issues their own parchment (normally referencing each other).
- **Lead Institution:** A lead Institution must be identified which will take responsibility for the overall administration of the PhD Researcher's work and examination process.
- **Admission:** The PhD degree applicant must meet the minimum entry requirements of both the IUA university and those of the partner institution as set out in their respective academic regulations. Ideally, the applicant will be specifically identified as registering for a joint or dual/double PhD degree award on each institutional student management system.
- **Registration:** The PhD Researcher is normally registered both in the IUA university and the partner institution for the duration of the PhD programme. This will typically be for four years with a minimum registration of 3 years.
- **Fees:** Fee payment arrangements for each year of the PhD degree and contingency if the PhD Researcher's registration goes beyond the time should be specified. Normally the fee is paid to the institution where the student is carrying out the research.
- **Location of PhD Researcher:** The PhD Researcher must spend a minimum period of time (full-time), in person, on-site in either the IUA university or the partner institution. The minimum period of time is specific to the IUA university and can be 6, 12 or 24 months in duration. IUA universities will not sign a co-supervisory agreement unless the PhD Researcher agrees to spend the minimum period full-time in their university.

- **Supervision:** There must be a minimum of one named supervisor in each institution.
- **Training Requirements:** Education and training modules are integral to the PhD programme in IUA Universities. Each Irish university has a prescribed minimum taught ECTS credits as part of the PhD programme. Modules can be taken at either the IUA university or at the partner institution.
- **Progression:** Following the regulations of each institution, formal progression processes must be in place to monitor the progress of the PhD Researcher at regular intervals. The assessment panel is always independent of the supervisor. The agreement must articulate what the exit strategy will be should the student not progress at any formal progress assessment.
- **Dispute Resolution:** Parties shall seek to settle any dispute, controversy or claim arising out of, or in connection with, any agreement through amicable negotiations. If the co-supervision arrangement is not operating to the satisfaction of either party, that party may terminate the agreement without penalty. However, both parties must ensure satisfactory arrangements are put in place for the student to complete their programme in one of the institutions.
- **Data Protection:** PhD Researcher data will need to be transferred between collaborating institutions. The PhD Researcher must specifically consent to the sharing of their personal details including assessment results. The collaborating institutions will enter into a data sharing agreement in respect of any personal data of a student to be shared between them.
- **Insurance:** The IUA University and partner institution will maintain policies of insurance covering any negligent acts, errors or omissions in connection with their performance of the agreement and the hosting of a student there-under.
  - IUA Universities do NOT provide health insurance. EU PhD Researchers studying in Ireland or Irish PhD Researchers studying in the EU should obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) which will provide them with access to the public health system of the EU country within which they are not normally resident. In addition to the EHIC, such students should also consider taking out travel and personal accident insurance in their home country in respect of their time in another country.
  - Non-EU PhD Researchers must obtain private health insurance either in their home country or in Ireland. Insurance must cover the student for up to €25,000 for in-hospital treatment.

Subject to its legal liability, each institution shall indemnify and keep indemnified its own staff, students and agents against claims arising under any interinstitutional agreement and the hosting of a student there-under. Neither institution shall be liable for any act, omission, neglect, default, loss, damage, personal injury or theft arising from the actions of the staff, students and agents of the other institution.



- **Discipline:** PhD Researchers are under the Student Code of both partner institutions while registered to the PhD programme.
- **Intellectual Property:** The intellectual property rights of material developed by each institution shall remain the property of that institution. If required, a separate intellectual property agreement should be developed.
- **Health and Safety:** Each party is responsible for ensuring that the PhD Researcher is provided with a safe place of study / research during their time with said party. All necessary safety information, training, equipment, induction and oversight will be provided by the party hosting the student at that time.
- **Appeals:** A candidate may appeal an assessment decision conducted by the assessment appeals process of the institution where the appeal is being made.
- **Final Examination:** Irish universities require a PhD Degree candidate to be examined in private by viva voce examination. The partner institution may also require a public defence as part of the examination process.  
Normally, the lead institution will be responsible for organising the viva voce examination. The Examination Committee will normally be composed of a minimum of one External Examiner, independent of both institutions, an Internal Examiner from each institution and a non-voting Chair of the Examination Committee who is a faculty member from one of the institutions.  
The recommendation of the Examination Committee should be completed on the template of each partner university and submitted to the relevant University PhD degree awarding committee.  
Each University PhD degree awarding committee will decide on the basis of the submitted report and, where necessary, clarification or correspondence with the examiners whether to accept the recommendation of the Examination Committee and award or not award the PhD degree with changes where these are specified. The recommendation of the Examination Committee to award a PhD degree must be accepted by both institutions for the joint PhD degree to be awarded.
- **Parchment/Academic Transcript/Diploma Supplement:** Generation of a parchment/academic transcript/diploma supplement will normally be managed by the lead institution and will require the cooperation of both institutions in relation to crests, signatures, seals etc. Therefore an administrative contact in each institution should be identified.  
Issuance of replacement parchments shall require the consent of both institutions. In the case of University of Galway, Maynooth University, University College Dublin and University College Cork, the National University of Ireland will issue the replacement parchment.



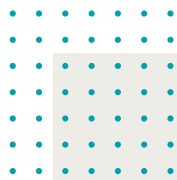
# Appendix 1: Checklist



This checklist can be used to ensure all aspects of a co-supervisory arrangement have been addressed. Note this checklist is not exhaustive and is subject to change in the event of changes to the requirements and regulations of individual institutions.

Appended overarching collaborative agreement if appropriate e.g. Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions, UNICA etc	
The admission requirements in each institution have been met	
The duration of the PhD Programme	
Location of PhD Researcher in Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 & Year 4	
The overall student experience of the collaboration has been considered	
Access to resources e.g. training/library/lab etc has been considered	
Registration status of the PhD Researcher in each institution	
The supervision arrangements articulated and include:	
a) Principal Supervisor:	
b) Co-supervisor:	
c) Supervisory Panel members:	
Formal progression step(s)	
Have Credit transfer arrangements been put in place for credit-bearing modules?	
Fee payment arrangements have been detailed	
Funding arrangements have been detailed	
Health insurance in place. Irish Universities do not provide any health insurance to any staff or students.	
There are requirements under student visas for non-EU students to take out appropriate cover when studying in Ireland	
Intellectual Property considerations	
Legal Context considerations in the event of a dispute	
GDPR measures are in place	
Equality Diversity & Inclusion and a commitment to unconscious bias have been satisfactorily considered	
The items below need to be agreed with respect to the examination and award of the PhD	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before submission of the thesis to the University there must be sign off that thesis was undertaken under the supervision of the supervisors (both supervisors)</li> <li>• Language of thesis</li> <li>• Deadline for submission</li> <li>• Examination requirements e.g. makeup of the examination committee</li> <li>• Type of defence eg: private or private and public</li> <li>• Viva voce location</li> <li>• Viva voce language</li> <li>• Viva voce reports on institutional form i.e. one for each institution</li> <li>• Final Submission of Thesis</li> <li>• Process for non-progression</li> <li>• Appeals</li> <li>• Dispute Resolution</li> <li>• Award process in each institution e.g. in UCD via Academic Council Committee for Examinations</li> <li>• A digital copy of the research thesis is automatically deposited in the Research Repository and, without an embargo being set, is immediately publicly available to view</li> <li>• Graduation location</li> </ul>	
Institution with responsibility for the generation of the Parchment and Transcript/, Diploma supplement.	
Arrangements for the exchange or transfer of institutional logos/crests if required	
Signature/formal sign off of the agreement by relevant appropriate hierarchy	
Publicity/promotion/marketing of the collaboration has been considered if required	





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