

Policies and Procedures

Research Office

Joint PhD (Cotutelle) Programmes

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Responsibility: Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & International)
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1 Overview

As a research-intensive university engaged in a range of Pacific regional and international activities, the University of the South Pacific (USP) recognises the benefits of international exchange for both students and staff. As a consequence, a cotutelle policy has been established to promote and strengthen research collaborations between USP and other research-intensive universities worldwide. The intent of the cotutelle policy is therefore to facilitate international research collaboration through the development of individual cotutelle agreements with approved partner institutions. 'Cotutelle' refers to a PhD degree program that is undertaken jointly with supervision at both USP and the partner institution. The PhD student (regional or international) must spend time in residence at both USP and the partner institution during their candidature and, if successful, will be awarded a PhD degree jointly by both partner institutions. USP does not support 'dual awards' whereby the candidate receives separate degrees from each partner institution.

The cotutelle degree provides benefits to candidates as well as the partner institutions. It enriches the candidates' training experiences, exposes them to different educational environments and encourages them to forge personal and professional links that will enhance their career prospects. Cotutelle agreements also support the strategic goals of USP in developing and strengthening research networks and enhancing PhD programme recruitment. Students seeking to undertake a cotutelle degree need to have an appropriately resourced project and appropriate supervision at both partner institutions. Potential candidates must also satisfy each university's normal admission requirements, including language proficiency.

This Joint PhD (Cotutelle) Policy affects only those students who enrol officially at two partner institutions and aim to receive a joint award from both institutions upon successful completion. There are many other means to support both inbound and outbound student exchange. USP also supports the inclusion of approved co-supervisors from overseas tertiary institutions on the supervisory team. None of these other forms of international exchange is prejudiced by the Joint PhD (Cotutelle) policy.

2 Policy

- 2.1 A formal Cotutelle Agreement must be drawn up between the two partner institutions in respect of each candidate.
- 2.2 Senate must approve the initial Cotutelle Agreement with each partner institution, which will then be recognized as an Approved Partner Institution for cotutelle agreements using the same agreement template.

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- 2.3 Subsequent cotutelle agreements with an Approved Partner Institution using the same agreement template must be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & International).
- 2.4 Material changes to the agreement template for an Approved Partner Institution must be approved by Senate.
- 2.5 The Cotutelle Agreement Template appended may be followed. Otherwise, significant deviations from this template must be clearly explained and a rationale for such deviations provided when the initial agreement with a partner institution is presented for approval to Senate.
- 2.6 Cotutelle candidates must meet the normal PhD entry requirements of USP.
- 2.7 The periods of residence at each of the partner institutions must be specified in the Cotutelle Agreement. Cotutelle students must spend a minimum of 18 months in residence at USP during their PhD candidacy.
- 2.8 Cotutelle students will be registered full-time at USP for the duration of their candidacy.
- 2.9 Cotutelle students will pay fees to USP, according to the full-time PhD fees schedule, as published in the Handbook & Calendar, for those Semesters that include a period of residence at USP.
- 2.10 Throughout their candidacy, cotutelle students must follow the USP regulations and procedures for student progress. This will include any period of provisional registration prior to acceptance of the research proposal, as stipulated in the offer letter, as well as timely submission of progress reports each Semester. The minimum and maximum candidatures for PhD students will also apply.
- 2.11 USP will not be responsible for any costs that accrue to the student as a result of undertaking the cotutelle arrangement, and this must be stated in the Agreement.
- 2.12 Every Cotutelle Agreement must have a section that details responsibilities and procedures in cases of conflict or dispute and matters of intellectual property.
- 2.13 The arrangements for examination of the student for the joint PhD degree must be detailed in the Cotutelle Agreement and must include detailed written assessment of the thesis by at least two independent external examiners approved in advance by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & International) at USP.
- 2.14 On award of the joint PhD degree, all degree parchments and transcripts produced must state that the degree is awarded by both institutions and must carry the logo of both institutions.

3 Procedures

- 3.1 To establish a Cotutelle Agreement with an Approved Partner Institution, the proposed supervisor should use the template from an existing agreement and seek approval

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- from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & International), by submitting the proposed agreement and a completed Cotutelle Agreement Application Form (Appendix 1).
- 3.2 To establish a Cotutelle Agreement with a partner institution for which no earlier agreement exists, the supervisor should use the generic Cotutelle Agreement template (Appendix 2) wherever possible. Otherwise, a template provided by the partner institution may be used, but any deviations from this Policy and the generic Cotutelle Agreement template must be clearly described on the application form. The application along with the completed draft agreement should be sent to the Council and Central Committee Secretariat for approval by Senate.
 - 3.3 A copy of all approved cotutelle agreements should be lodged with the Research Office, from whom the list of Approved Partner Institutions will be available on request.

Joint PhD (Cotutelle) Programme Agreement

Parties

The University of the South Pacific (USP)

Established in 1970 as a Tertiary Education and Research institution at the Privy Council, London, with headquarters at Laucala Campus, Lacuala Bay Road, Suva, Fiji

And

<Partner University>

<Details>

Background

1. The parties participating in this Joint PhD (Cotutelle) Programme Agreement seek to enhance research co-operation and collaboration between the institutions.
2. <Student name> wishes to conduct collaborative research at the two institutions as part of a Joint PhD (Cotutelle) Programme.
3. This agreement sets out the arrangements agreed upon by both institutions.

Enrolment and Fees

4. The student will apply and must meet the normal PhD entry requirements of each partner institution.
5. The student will be enrolled and have access to the student support facilities of both partner institutions for the duration of the Joint PhD (Cotutelle) Programme.
6. The student must pay the University of the South Pacific the appropriate full-time student fees for each Semester that the student is resident at USP, according to the current Handbook and Calendar, whether they are resident for the whole semester or part of it.
7. The student must attend USP for a minimum of 18 months (3 Semesters) during their Joint PhD (Cotutelle) Programme.
8. <Partner institution fees requirements>

Supervision

9. The research work will be undertaken in both universities under co-supervision by at least one supervisor at each university.
10. At USP <Supervisor(s) names, Department/Institute> will co-supervise the PhD student.
11. At <Partner Institution>, <Supervisor(s) names, Department/Institute> will co-supervise the PhD student.

University Policies

12. Except where superseded by this Agreement, the policies, guidelines, regulations and procedures of the partner institution at which the student is resident at the time will apply.
13. Where either partner institution undertakes any disciplinary action against the student for any reason, the supervisor will inform the other partner institution, which may elect to apply its own disciplinary procedures.
14. The student must comply wherever possible with the PhD student progress regulations of both partner institutions throughout the duration of the Joint PhD (Cotutelle) Programme, irrespective of where they are resident at the time.

Pattern of Study

15. The student will spend the following periods at each of the partner institutions:

USP	<Partner Institution>
<Dates or Semesters>	<Dates or Semesters>
<Dates or Semesters>	<Dates or Semesters>
<Dates or Semesters>	<Dates or Semesters>

16. The student may deviate from this schedule with agreement of all supervisors, providing that item 7 is adhered to.

Examination

17. The thesis will be submitted to both parties and examined according to the normal PhD regulations of each partner institution.
18. Where external examiners are appointed to assess the thesis, the same examiners may be used by both institutions, with appointment of the examiners being co-ordinated by the supervisory team, subject to the rules of appointment of the institution.

Award of the Degree

19. If the thesis meets the examination requirements of both partner institutions, the institutions agree to jointly award the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).
20. The degree award documents, including the degree parchments produced by both institutions, will state that the PhD is jointly awarded by both institutions and bear the logos of both institutions.
21. A decision by one partner institution not to award the degree does not preclude the other institution from awarding the degree.

Copyright and Intellectual Property

22. The parties recognise that the copyright of the thesis belongs to the student.

23. The student, the supervisors and the universities will comply with the relevant institutional Intellectual Property policies in order to protect the doctoral research and the publication of research results.
24. In the event of potential commercialisation of the research, the universities, which must have authority to negotiate on the student's behalf, will negotiate in good faith the commercialisation of any intellectual property arising from the research program in accordance with their respective Intellectual Property policies.

Research Integrity and Ethical Clearance

25. While enrolled on the Joint PhD (Cotutelle) Programme, the student must comply with all institutional codes of conduct for ethical research conduct of both institutions.
26. The student must comply with the research ethics policies of both institutions and must follow the procedures of the institution in which the research is being conducted for obtaining ethical clearance for the research.

Candidature and Termination of Candidature

27. The period of candidature on the Joint PhD (Cotutelle) Programme is from the latest date of admission to the PhD programme of the two institutions or latest date of signature of this agreement (whichever is latest) to the date of submission of the thesis, withdrawal of the candidate or termination due to disciplinary action applied following the normal disciplinary procedures of either partner institution.
28. The regulations governing the normal period of maximum candidature of both partner institutions must also be followed, along with regulations for suspension of studies and extension of the period of maximum candidature due to allowable extenuating circumstances. Non-compliance with either institution's policies in this regard may result in termination of the Joint PhD (Cotutelle) Programme.

Resolution of Conflict

29. In the event of a conflict arising between the policies and procedures of the two institutions in respect to this agreement, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & International) at USP and the <PVC Research equivalent> at <Partner Institution> agree to mediate to resolve the issues.

_____ Signed: _____ Date: _____

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & International), USP

_____ Signed: _____ Date: _____

<PVC Research equivalent>, <Partner Institution>

Cotutelle Agreement Application Form

Refer to the Policy on Joint PhD (Cotutelle) Programmes before completing this application form.

Application for (tick one only):

- New joint PhD (cotutelle) programme (no existing agreements in place) – requires Senate approval
- New joint PhD (cotutelle) agreement (already an Approved Partner Institution¹) using a modified agreement template – requires Senate approval
- New joint PhD (cotutelle) agreement (already an Approved Partner Institution) using the existing agreement template – requires approval of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & International)

1. Details of PhD student candidate

Name of student candidate: _____ Nationality: _____

Qualifications: _____

Does the candidate meet the USP entry requirements for the PhD degree? (Y/N): _____

Endorsement of candidate by the Chair of the Faculty/Section Postgraduate Committee:

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

2. Details of the partner institution

Title of Institution: _____ Country: _____

School/Institute/Department where the student will mainly reside: _____

Provide a brief resume of the international research profile of the partner institution:

¹ The Research Office maintains a list of Approved Partner Institutions and Cotutelle Agreement templates

3. Details of the supervisory team:

Name and title

Institution

No. Current/Completed PhD students

4. Briefly describe any ongoing/proposed research collaboration

5. Have you used an existing cotutelle agreement template provided by the Research Office?

(Y/N) _____. If not, describe any deviation from the existing template and provide a rationale:

6. Does the Cotutelle Agreement² state/specify:

(please tick)

The periods of residence at each of the partner institutions must be specified in the Cotutelle Agreement?

That the student will spend a minimum of 18 months in residence at USP during their PhD candidacy?

That the student will be registered full-time at USP for the duration of their candidacy?

That the student will pay full time fees to USP for those Semesters that include a period of residence at USP?

That throughout their candidacy, cotutelle students must follow the USP regulations and procedures for student progress? This must include any period of provisional registration prior to acceptance of the research proposal, as stipulated in the offer letter, as well as timely submission of progress reports each

²Please append the Cotutelle Agreement

Semester. The minimum and maximum candidatures for PhD students will also apply.

That USP will not be responsible for any costs that accrue to the student as a result of undertaking the cotutelle arrangement?

The responsibilities and procedures in cases of conflict or dispute and matters of intellectual property?

The arrangements for examination of the student, which must include detailed written assessment of the thesis by at least two independent external examiners approved in advance by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & International) at USP?

That on award of the joint PhD degree, all degree parchments and transcripts produced must state that the degree is awarded by both institutions and must carry the logo of both institutions?

Proposer (name): _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____

7. Endorsement/Approval³ of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & International):

Signed: _____ Date: _____

8. Decision of the Senate (if applicable):

At its meeting on (date) _____, the Senate:

Approved the cotutelle agreement.

Approved the cotutelle agreement, subject to modifications which have been implemented.

Did not approve the cotutelle agreement.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Representative of Council & Central Committee Secretariat

THE COTUTELLE AGREEMENT MUST BE ATTACHED

³ For Approved Partner Institutions, where there is an existing Cotutelle Agreement and where the existing template has been used, PVC (R&I) may approve the agreement.