

Guidance note for co-tutelle arrangements

The guidelines for co-tutelle arrangements below set out the process and principles under which co-tutelle arrangements should be developed.

Background

Jointly supervised PhDs (widely known as co-tutelles) offer PhD students the chance to be jointly supervised by UEA and a university in another country, resulting in a **dual degree** award: a PhD from UEA and a doctorate from the partner university.

Co-tutelle arrangements enable PhD students to embark on jointly-supervised research degrees which should considerably enhance their research experience and employment opportunities on an international scale. The benefits include access to two research environments and cultures as well as access to the training and facilities of two research-intensive universities.

Approval process

The PGR Executive agreed at its meeting on 9 December 2015 the introduction of a two stage process for the approval of co-tutelle agreements – the first stage being approval of the partner organisation (due diligence), the second stage being academic approval of the individual co-tutelle agreement(s). The two stages may in some cases operate concurrently.

A co-tutelle agreement is a model of collaborative provision and as such falls under Chapter B10 of the QAA Quality Code 'Managing Higher Education Provision with Others'. Due diligence of potential partner institutions is an essential part of the process along with the academic arrangements. Please [contact the PGR Service](#) as early as possible to discuss your requirements.

Individual student co-tutelle arrangements may be initiated by either the PhD Supervisors or by prospective research students. In the case of the latter, the PhD Supervisors of the collaborating universities must confirm the applicant's eligibility for joint supervision and acceptance of the student's proposal in writing. The primary supervisor at UEA should then take the lead in developing the agreement not the prospective student.

Multiple co-tutelle arrangements are likely to be part of a wider institutional agreement e.g. a Memorandum of Understanding between the University and a partner university, initiated by a project sponsor at the University. Both primary supervisor and project sponsor are hereafter known as the "Proposer".

Stage One

Approval of partner institutions - due diligence

The purpose of due diligence is to examine whether the prospective partner university is an organisation with which the University would wish to work and be associated with, from a financial, reputational and academic quality perspective. The partner(s) must have the capacity in legal, financial and resources terms to enter into a productive and sustainable relationship. The extent of due diligence should be proportionate to the risk involved.

Due diligence checks can take several weeks to complete. It is important therefore that the Proposer [contacts the PGR Service](#) to discuss co-tutelle arrangements well in advance of when the applicant(s) intend(s) to commence their studies.

Step 1

- 1.1 The Proposer should check with the PGR Service **at an early stage** if the proposed partner has already been approved for co-tutelle arrangements with the University. If not, the due diligence checklist must be completed and approval sought from the PGR Executive - see Step 2 onwards. If yes, the Proposer should contact the PGR Service to draw up the individual student co-tutelle agreement(s), for signature by the relevant parties – See Stage Two 'Academic approval of the individual co-tutelle agreement.'
- 1.2 *Multiple student co-tutelle arrangements* - where multiple co-tutelle arrangements are planned an overarching institutional agreement such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for jointly supervised PhDs should first be agreed between UEA and the partner university, 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.

The Proposer should check with [the PGR Service](#) and [Academic Partnerships](#) (formerly the Partnerships Office) if there is an existing institutional agreement between UEA and the proposed partner university. [The International Office](#) should also be informed of the prospective co-tutelle partnership (in case they have pre-existing links with the institution). If there is no pre-existing agreement, the Proposer should [contact the PGR Service](#) for further advice.

Step 2

- 2.1 If the University and partner institution have not collaborated before on co-tutelle arrangements the due diligence checklist [**see Appendix A**] should be completed by the Proposer, to ensure that the partner institution can fulfill its role in the arrangement, and the necessary approvals must be sought. The Proposer should [contact their Faculty/Institute PGR Service team](#) who will provide guidance on the due diligence process and help them to complete the due diligence checklist.
- 2.2 All sections on the due diligence checklist are to be completed. This process will provide valuable information to help ensure that both the partner and the development are appropriate and satisfy University requirements and QAA expectations. By undertaking this analysis at an early stage, it will help the Proposer and the University determine whether the proposal is worth pursuing.
- 2.3 The Proposer is responsible, with support from the PGR Service, for liaising with the partner institution for information required to complete the due diligence checklist and should sign the checklist to confirm that the information is correct.

- 2.4 [The PGR Director](#) signs to confirm on behalf of the School that the proposal aligns with School strategy, and that the School takes responsibility for the ongoing monitoring of the co-tutelle arrangement.
- 2.5 The Proposer should send the completed form to [the PGR Service](#) who will ensure that the due diligence checklist is complete before forwarding the checklist and any associated documents to the PGR Executive for approval.

Step 3

- 3.1 The completed checklist will be considered by the PGR Executive who, if satisfied with the information provided, will approve the partner organisation and agree Approval in Principle for the co-tutelle arrangement to proceed. Where there are any areas of concern the School PGR Director will be asked to provide further information or clarification.
- 3.2 Where a proposal requires urgent approval in between PGR Executive meetings, Chair's Action may be undertaken to consider the collaboration.
- 3.3 The approval of new co-tutelle partner institutions will be reported to LTC.
- 3.4 Where a project is to be advertised that refers to joint supervision the co-tutelle partner must have been approved before advertisement takes place.
- 3.5 The partner may have their own approval requirements, which need to be met before proceeding to Stage Two.

Stage Two

Academic approval of the individual co-tutelle agreement

Individual student co-tutelle agreements can only be initiated once the partner institution has been approved by the University and for multiple co-tutelle arrangements once a signed institutional agreement is in place.

Proposers should note that individual co-tutelle agreements, particularly with new institutional partners, can take a considerable amount of time to finalise as they require detailed involvement and negotiation between administrative and/or contract teams at each partner university, and often complex funding, contractual and visa arrangements.

Step 1 Drafting of co-tutelle agreements

- 1.1 All co-tutelle agreements must be in place before the student commences their studies.
- 1.2 The University's co-tutelle agreement document should be the starting point for discussions with the partner institution. [An example is provided](#), but each agreement will be different – please [contact the PGR Service](#) at an early stage to seek guidance.
- 1.3 [School PGR Directors](#) should be consulted to ensure that the proposed supervisory and training arrangements are appropriate and in accordance with the [UEA Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#). Early consideration of these issues should expedite the process of approving co-tutelle agreements to ensure that they can be signed off before students start their studies.

- 1.4 Arrangements for training, supervision, progress monitoring, fees, length of time in each country and assessment should be set out in the co-tutelle agreement. Candidates must spend a minimum of 18 months at UEA during the registration period. The student should receive research training from both institutions, which should be agreed in advance. Decisions will need to be made about the requirements for the thesis and oral examination that satisfy the requirements of both institutions.
- 1.5 The PGR Service is responsible for liaising with the Proposer and the partner institution to draw up the student co-tutelle agreement.

Step 2 Approvals

Once the wording of the student co-tutelle agreement has been agreed by all parties the agreement will be considered by the Academic Director of Research Degree Programmes who signs all co-tutelle agreements on behalf of LTC. If approved this will be reported to PGR Executive and to LTC.

- 2.1 The PGR Service is responsible for:
 - arranging for the co-tutelle agreement to be signed by the UEA Supervisor(s) and student.
 - arranging for the co-tutelle agreement to be signed by the Academic Director (and checking that institutional approval is in place where required before doing so).
 - ensuring that appropriate colleagues at the partner institution sign and return the student co-tutelle agreement to UEA.
 - forwarding copies of the fully signed student co-tutelle agreement to all relevant parties.
- 2.2 Up-to-date registers of all co-tutelle arrangements are maintained by the PGR Service.

Stage Three

Application, Offer and Admission

- 1.1 The prospective research student may formally apply for admission to both UEA and partner institution(s) at the initial setting up stage of the co-tutelle agreement or the student can wait until the co-tutelle agreement is agreed and then apply.
- 1.2 The PGR Service, will liaise with the student to ensure that timely application is made for a Certificate of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) where required.
- 1.3 The PGR Service will ensure that the student has also received an offer from the partner university. A copy of the UEA formal Offer Letter should be forwarded to the partner university by the PGR Service and UEA should receive a copy of the formal Offer Letter from the partner university.
- 1.4 The student must complete the registration procedures for both UEA and the partner university and is required to be registered as a PhD student at UEA for the full duration of their programme of study. Students will be included in the statistical information on student numbers compiled by both universities.

Stage Four

Monitoring and review

- 1.1 The primary supervisor is responsible for overseeing the day to day operation of the co-tutelle arrangement, and for the overall management and direction of the student's degree as specified in the [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#).
- 1.2 The probationary review process should take place according to the University's Regulations and [Research Degree Policy Documents](#). The expectation is that this process will take place at UEA.
- 1.3 The co-tutelle arrangement will be reviewed at least annually by the School PGR Director.

Stage Five

Assessment

Step 1 Appointment of Examiners

- 1.1 The standard UEA process for the appointment of examiners should be followed noting that the supervisor at the partner institution cannot act as external examiner.
- 1.2 The internal examiner and external examiner should be notified in their letters of appointment of any special conditions that will apply to the thesis or oral examination e.g. the provision of a summary of the thesis in a different language or the attendance of an observer at the viva from the partner institution. They should also be informed that their examiners' reports may be shared with the partner institution in order for that institution to make their doctoral degree award.

Step 2 Oral examination and award of degree

- 2.1 In most circumstances students will be examined solely under the UEA Regulations with an internal examiner from UEA and an external examiner conducting the viva held in Norwich. In these arrangements an observer is present at the oral examination from the partner institution to ensure that the partner institutions' assessment requirements are met. The observer will not have any input into the UEA examiners' report. In exceptional circumstances students may be required to undertake two examinations, in close succession, particularly where the regulations of the partners differ significantly.
- 2.2 Once a student has been successfully examined under UEA processes, including any corrections or revision required, and has been recommended for a UEA award, the partner University is free to make their doctoral degree award (or not) under their Regulations on the basis of this examination. The qualifications awarded under our current co-tutelle arrangements are 'integrated but independent' i.e. a student does not need to satisfy the requirements of all the partners to receive an award. The University does not currently offer joint degrees (one parchment with all Universities' names on it) but can offer dual degrees (two separate parchments) provided the student is registered at UEA. The University can provide if required a statement to accompany the UEA degree parchment indicating that the degree was obtained under co-supervision.

Further information

In October 2015 the Quality Assurance Agency published a Characteristics Statement 'Qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body' which forms a component of Part A (Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards) of the Quality Code:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Joint-Degree-Characteristics-15.pdf>

Chapter B10 of the Quality Code: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others

http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Pages/Quality-Code-Chapter-B10.aspx#.V3U5_hBwaUk

Approved PGR Executive 9 December 2015

Updated by PGR Service April 2018

APPENDIX A



Due Diligence Checklist – Co-tutelle arrangements

The purpose of due diligence is to examine whether the prospective partner is an organisation with which the University would wish to work and be associated with, from a financial, reputational and academic quality perspective. The partner(s) must have the capacity in legal, financial and resources terms to enter into a productive and sustainable relationship. The extent of due diligence should be proportionate to the risk involved. You may be required to provide further evidence to corroborate the information provided in this checklist.

For individual student co-tutelle arrangements, where this is the first agreement at the partner institution - the due diligence checklist should be completed by the UEA primary supervisor and approved by the School PGR Director.

Where it is anticipated that there will be multiple co-tutelles at the partner institution, the due diligence checklist should be completed by the project sponsor for the proposed partnership.

Please [contact the Postgraduate Research Service](#) **before** completing this checklist for general guidance on the due diligence process and for support in completing the form.

1. Proposed Partner Details

1.1 Name and address of proposed partner institution
1.2 Country
1.3 Status of institution (e.g. public university/college, private university/college)
1.4 Date institution established
1.5 Size of institution (e.g. student numbers, academic and management/administrative staff numbers)
1.6 Range of courses delivered (e.g. undergraduate, postgraduate taught degrees, research degrees)

1.7 Language(s) of delivery and assessment. *Where the language will not be English please consider any implications of this*

For an individual student co-tutelle arrangement only

1.8 Name and title of proposed supervisor at partner institution

2. Academic Background

2.1 What is the reputation and academic standing of the proposed partner institution? Is it comparable to the University of East Anglia? *Please include any information available from UK or other government offices and agencies in the country in which the partner organisation is based.*

2.2 What are the benefits of this research link (at institution, School, or supervisory level)?

2.3 How will the proposed partner institution ensure that there is a safe and appropriate research environment, in particular capacity for continuity of doctoral supervision, and access to relevant equipment and learning resources?

2.4 How will effective systems be put in place for communication between the collaborating institutions, including nominated contacts from academic and administrative staff?

2.5 Please attach evidence of explicit support for the co-tutelle arrangement to proceed from the School PGR Director (or equivalent) at the partner institution.

3. Quality assurance

3.1 How will the quality of the supervision and training provided through the collaboration be comparable to the quality of supervision and training provided by the University?

3.2 How does the institution manage quality and standards? *Please include reports from funding or external quality assurance/professional bodies where applicable.*

3.3 Please provide details of the proposed partner institution's policy on equality of opportunity and diversity.

4. Financial Standing

4.1 Does the proposed partner institution have the financial means to carry out its obligations under the co-tutelle arrangement?
4.2 Does the proposed partner institution receive any state or public sector funding? (e.g. grants, subsidies, payments or allowances)
4.3 Is the proposed partner institution adequately resourced, for example in terms of facilities, resources and infrastructure?

5. Legal Status

5.1 Does the proposed partner have the power/permits/licences required to collaborate with us?
5.2 Are any third party consents required in the proposed partner's home country? If so, what are the procedures and timescales for obtaining them?
5.3 Are there any Foreign and Commonwealth Office concerns regarding personal safety, health and travel to the region?

6. Approvals

6.1 Completed by Primary Supervisor (<i>for an individual student co-tutelle</i>) / Project Sponsor (<i>for multiple co-tutelle arrangement</i>)	
Name:	School:
Signature:	
Date:	
6.2 Approved by School PGR Director (<i>for an individual student co-tutelle</i>) / Faculty Associate Dean (<i>for multiple co-tutelle arrangement within one Faculty</i>)	
Name:	
Signature:	
Date:	
Comments:	

6.3 Consideration by PGR Executive

Approved / Not approved (*please delete as appropriate*)

Date of PGR Executive meeting / Chair's action:

Comments: