

RESEARCH DEGREE POLICY DOCUMENTS

Document 13 Policy on Split-Site PhD Partnerships

1 Introduction

- 1.1 A split-site PhD is defined as a PhD that leads to a University of East Anglia award and involves students being fully registered as University of East Anglia students whilst spending a significant period of their research away from the University, at another approved institution, which will normally be overseas. All split-site PhDs require a formal agreement between the University and the partner institution(s). The split-site PhD is used to increase collaborative research and develop international partnerships.
- 1.2 It may be appropriate to make individual student arrangements that permit a student to undertake some of their research at an approved location away from the University – for example, for students based in industry. These are not referred to as split-site PhDs as they do not involve institution-to-institution agreements.
- 1.3 There are other arrangements that offer mobility to PGR students, including students undertaking fieldwork or other specific visits away from the University. These types of arrangements may fall under the University's Policy on Placements or other policies, but they should not be seen as split-site PhDs.

2 Principles of split-site provision

- 2.1 There should be a nominated lead academic at the University of East Anglia responsible for a particular split-site PhD arrangement. This individual would work closely with the Postgraduate Research Service, as well as with the International Office and Academic Partnerships (formerly the Partnerships Office) where appropriate.
- 2.2 Split-site PhD arrangements should be made with institutions of good academic standing, which can provide an excellent environment for the University's research students.
- 2.3 Split-site PhD arrangements should be reviewed regularly, at least every five years.
- 2.4 There should be a written agreement for all split-site PhD arrangements, setting out the rights and responsibilities of the student, the University of East Anglia, and the partner institution(s).

- 2.5 All provision should be in line with [the Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#).

3 How to approve a split-site PhD

- 3.1 Split-site PhD partnerships are subject to the University's usual collaborative approval mechanisms, and Academic Partnerships and the Postgraduate Research Service should both be involved in their development and approval. The approval process is based on the assumption that each relevant Faculty Associate Dean of Postgraduate Research has been informed and is supportive of a split-site PhD proposal.

Contact the Postgraduate Research Service

- 3.1.1 Split-site PhD partnership proposals should be discussed initially with [the Head of Postgraduate Research Service](#), who will clarify who within the Postgraduate Research Service will support development of the proposal and liaise with Academic Partnerships. International split-site PhD partnerships should also be discussed with [the International Office](#), who may be able to give further specific guidance on a prospective partner and its educational system.

Due diligence, site visit and risk assessment

- 3.1.2 Due diligence should be completed on the partner institution. [A checklist](#) is available from the Postgraduate Research Service. This should be completed and approved by the Postgraduate Research Executive as part of the approval of an arrangement. In some cases a site visit must be undertaken. This is to assure the University that students studying a PhD will continue to work in an environment reflecting the University's [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#) and the University's Regulations. The checklist covers quality assurance and risk assessment.

Approval

- 3.1.3 Split-site PhD partnerships need approval by the Postgraduate Research Executive, and would normally have been considered by the relevant Faculty Graduate School Executive in order to ensure that there is, or will be, a suitable [training pathway](#). They should also have approval from Senate, either in full or by delegation to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) depending on the level of risk involved.

4 Drafting an Agreement

- 4.1 A Memorandum of Agreement should be signed at institutional level by the Vice-Chancellor and the partner institution. However, no students will be admitted onto a University of East Anglia PhD until an Individual Doctoral Agreement is signed.
- 4.2 After the initial arrangement, individual arrangements with the partner institution are then catered for by completion and signature of Individual Doctoral Agreements, which are incorporated, on signature, into the overarching Memorandum of Agreement, and which cover arrangements for the supervision of each individual student.

5 Admissions, Registration, Residence and Fees

5.1 Admissions

All admissions information and other arrangements, including for induction, must be available to students and members of the supervisory team at both UEA and the partner institution.

5.2 Registration

Students should register annually with their Faculty in UEA. Students may also need to register temporarily with the partner institution if this is a requirement by that institution whilst studying away from UEA.

5.3 Residence

The University's minimum residence requirement at UEA for research candidates is 12 months (not necessarily over a continuous time period). Although this is a minimum period, Faculties may feel it is appropriate to make the time spent at UEA longer. Exact timings for periods spent at UEA should be agreed at the outset, but should normally include at least six months in each of the first and final years.

5.4 Fees

5.4.1 Usually, the following model of fees applies:

- For the time spent at UEA: The annual full-time fee for PhD students will apply (attendance in UEA must be for a minimum of 12 months in total). The fee will be charged pro rata in any one year.
- For the time spent at the partner institution: The annual fee to be paid to UEA will be at a reduced rate.

5.4.2 Any fee which may also be payable to the partner institution for the provision of supervisory support and the use of facilities during the period(s) of study away from UEA would also need to be negotiated with the partner institution. This would be an arrangement between the Faculty, the student and the partner institution.

6 Research and transferable skills training

6.1 All doctoral students are expected to undergo a training needs analysis. Arrangements for where and when this is to be carried out should be agreed at the outset of the student's programme and stated in the Individual Doctoral Agreement. Once the student's research and transferable skills training needs have been identified, it should be clearly set out in writing where and when any training will take place (i.e. at UEA or at the partner institution), and, if relevant, when it is to be assessed. There may be a need to develop a separate training pathway for students on a given split-site PhD partnership arrangement.

7 Supervision arrangements

- 7.1 Supervision arrangements should be clearly specified. The supervisory team should be based at UEA, with an additional named contact(s) at the partner institution. Composition of the supervisory team should comply with established criteria as set out in the University's Regulations and [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#). In addition, consideration must be given to the level of input from the partner institution, and this should be clearly defined at the outset.
- 7.2 The timing of, and arrangements for, supervisory visit(s) must be agreed at the start of the student's programme. There should also be regular contact between the student and the main supervisor (by email, phone, Skype, etc) whilst the student is away. It is also expected that the partner institution will provide any additional sources of support to the student if needed.
- 7.3 Supervisory requirements and the responsibilities of the supervisory team should comply with [the Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#), taking into account any special or alternative arrangements that may need to be made in the light of any supervision being provided at the partner institution. It is also important that students are aware of their responsibilities and that any special arrangements are put in place to enable them to carry out these responsibilities as required at the partner institution.

8 Monitoring student progress and formal reviews

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of the Faculty, through the supervisory team, to ensure that student progress is monitored and supported and that formal review mechanisms are in place as in [the Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#). Arrangements for progress monitoring and formal reviews should be agreed at the outset in writing, in consultation with the partner institution and with the student, and set out in the supervision agreement in the Memorandum of Agreement.
- 8.2 Effective supervision, and good organisation and planning on the part of both the student and members of the supervisory team, are fundamental to the success of a split-site PhD arrangement. It is therefore particularly important that informal monitoring and formal progress review meetings are carried out regularly, according to a pre-arranged schedule. Informal supervision meetings and formal review meetings should be fully documented, involving appropriate communication between supervisors as necessary, so that it is clear to all concerned how, when and where any problems or issues arising are to be addressed, and any subsequent actions taken.

9 Probationary Review

- 9.1 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.

10 Examination of the PhD

- 10.1 It is expected that the student will submit their thesis to their Faculty in UEA and that the oral examination (viva) will also take place in UEA. The student will be required to give notification of intention to submit in the normal way (i.e. at least three months prior to the date of submission). Examination arrangements and the examination process should be carried out as set out in the University's Regulations and [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#).
- 10.2 The oral examination (viva) will take place in UEA and the Faculty should ensure that arrangements are communicated well in advance to all concerned including the partner institution.

11 Award

- 11.1 On successful completion, the research degree will be awarded by the University of East Anglia.

12 Appeals and Complaints

- 12.1 In accordance with normal practice, students and supervisors should be made aware of [the University's Appeals and Complaints procedures](#). The University of East Anglia's procedures should also be invoked if a complaint or an Academic Appeal is made in connection with the student's period of study at the partner institution, although certain non-academic complaints may be considered under the partner institution's own complaints procedures.

13 Renewal

- 13.1 Split-site PhD arrangements should be renewed periodically, and not more than every five years. Renewing a PhD requires the following process:

Informal discussions about the renewal

- 13.1.1 In the first instance, discuss the need for renewal with [the Faculty Associate Dean for Postgraduate Research](#) and [the Head of Postgraduate Research Service](#). If there is support for renewing the agreement, proceed to 13.1.2.

Due diligence, site visit and risk assessment

- 13.1.2 Due diligence should be completed on the partner institution. [A checklist](#) is available from the Postgraduate Research Service. This should be completed and approved by the Postgraduate Research Executive as part of the approval of an arrangement. In some cases a site visit must be undertaken. This is to assure the University that students studying a PhD will continue to work in an environment reflecting the University's [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#) and the University's Regulations. The checklist covers quality assurance and risk assessment.

Approval of renewal

- 13.1.3 Renewals of split-site PhD arrangements should be submitted to the Postgraduate Research Executive for approval.

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