



The University of Sydney

Academic Board

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Decisions of the Academic Board meeting of 13 October 1999

The Board, at its meeting on 13 October 1999, endorsed the expansion of cotutelle arrangements to countries other than France, in accordance with the attached policy.

Erica Ring
Academic Board Officer

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Academic Board Policy Document: Cotutelle Scheme

Background

In February 1998, Senate approved amendments to the PhD resolutions providing for the establishment of cotutelle agreements whereby, if the necessary conditions for joint candidature had been met, a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy could also receive a doctorate from another University in respect of that candidature, each testamur acknowledging the circumstances under which the award was made.

These arrangements were made in response to an initiative of the French Government designed to establish and develop partnerships between French and other research units which include the facilitation of movement of French and other doctoral candidates under joint supervision arrangements. Cotutelle arrangements exist between French universities and universities in a number of other countries.

The prime intent of such agreements is that they form part of an ongoing or developing cooperative research collaboration between a department or research group in the University and one elsewhere. If the sole collaboration between the two departments was to be in respect of a particular candidature, then the net benefit to the University would have to be questioned.

Evidence of appropriate financial support both for student's and supervisor's/examiners' travel in each case would have to be provided by the Department concerned. The Dean would have to be satisfied that supervision and examination arrangements were satisfactory and fully understood by the potential candidate.

Cotutelle agreements fall under the Guidelines for Inter-Institutional Agreements and require the approval of the Head of Department, Dean and Pro-Vice-Chancellor with advice to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International) for each individual candidature. If no previous cotutelle agreement existed with the proposed partner institution, the approval of the Vice-Chancellor is also needed.

While generally it would be hoped that agreements could be negotiated from the commencement of candidature, it is recognized that the appropriateness of such an arrangement might only emerge some time into a particular candidature as a result of developing cooperation, and the University should be flexible enough to permit back-dated agreements to be made in these circumstances.

General principles governing cotutelle arrangements

The following general principles apply to cotutelle agreements. As arrangements are entered into with institutions in countries other than France, detailed country-specific principles will be developed, as necessary, to reflect the particular education practices that apply in that country.

- A cotutelle agreement must be drawn up between the two participating institutions in respect of each candidate, detailing the particular arrangements pertaining to that particular candidature. Normally such agreements take effect from the beginning of a candidature.

The agreement lists the two supervisors who are to undertake the joint supervision.

The candidature is to be divided between the two countries with alternate stays in each of the two countries and a minimum of 30% in each country.

- The agreement sets out the arrangements with regard to fees. At the least a candidate should be exempt from fees at one institution. An Australian student would be HECS-exempt and an international student would normally receive at least a fees waiver scholarship for the period within Australia. An overseas student proceeding under a cotutelle arrangement would be otherwise subject to the normal requirements and arrangements for international students.
- The agreement should specify the copyright of the thesis and other intellectual property issues.

- The thesis is to be written in either English or the language of instruction at the other participating institution, with an abstract provided in the other language.
- There is to be one examination process, and in the initial agreement it is determined whose processes will be followed, with both Universities agreeing to respect the outcome. There would be an exchange of letters with the candidate to ensure he/she was fully aware of all the special arrangements applying.

Country-specific principles

France

In respect of a cotutelle arrangement with a French university, the following principles apply:

- If the examination is carried out by a French institution at least two examiners would be appointed by each institution, one being the thesis supervisor. Two of these examiners prepare written reports on the thesis which are made available to the candidate and the examining jury. The candidate is required to defend the thesis in person in French or English and to provide an oral summary in the other language. The candidature does not progress to the oral defence stage if the examiners are not convinced of the candidate's *prima facie* preparedness.
- If the examination is carried out under the University of Sydney's procedures there would have to be some adjustment to cope with the expectation that both institutions appoint two of the examiners and that the supervisors had to be examiners. The relevant Sydney faculty would coordinate the examining process in the normal way. It could be agreed that any significant disagreement among the examiners would result in referral to a fifth examiner who would act as an assessor.
- The successful outcome of either examining process would be the award of the PhD from the University of Sydney and a Doctorat from the relevant French institution. The agreement would state that relevant certification would state that the award was made as a consequence of a cotutelle agreement with the University of The French Doctorat is normally awarded with the qualification *honorable, très honorable* or *très honorable avec félicitations*. This could be accommodated within the Sydney examination process by specifically asking examiners for their recommendation in respect of the Doctorat.
- The signing of such an agreement, particularly if the French institution is to examine, has financial implications for the University. At the very least the University may have to fund expenses associated with two examiners attending a thesis defence. Support for the student concerned, including travel, is another consideration. However, the intent of such agreements is that they should operate in a broader context of cooperative research between the two institutions. Departments/faculties proposing cotutelle arrangements would have to certify that the necessary financial support would be forthcoming. There is some French Government funding available on a competitive basis.

Countries other than France

In respect of a cotutelle arrangement with other than a French university, the arrangements for the candidature and examination arrangements must be specified and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee.



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Cotutelle agreement pro-forma/checklist

Attach documents as appropriate

University of Sydney Department
Proposed partner institution and department
Evidence of past and ongoing research collaboration including any existing cotutelle agreements
Proposed candidate and qualifications
Research topic
Rationale for a cotutelle agreement rather than other means of collaboration
Proposed supervisors and qualification/position University of Sydney Partner Institution
Proposed periods of residence at each institution
Proposed language of thesis
Proposed form of examination

Evidence of willingness of partner institution to enter into an agreement
Arrangements for fees
Scholarship/stipend and travel support for candidate
Funding arrangements for travel for supervisors/examiners
Evidence of candidate's understanding of proposed arrangements
Evidence of consultation with International Office to ensure visa and other requirements have been considered
Evidence of consultation with Student Centre to ensure Student Information System requirements have been considered
Other comments
Approvals
Head of Department
Dean
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (College)
<i>Copy to be sent to Chair, Graduate Studies Committee and the Scholarships Officer</i>
Notification to Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International)
Approval by Vice-Chancellor if no previous cotutelle agreement in existence with this institution