



Collaborative PhD Policy Policy UP21/13 (F21/897)

Policy Approver	Academic Board
Policy Sponsor	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Policy Owner	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training)
Policy Secretary	Academic Secretary
Policy Type	Academic
Policy Category	Academic Governance

1 Purpose

- 1.1 Through the Collaborative PhD degree program, the University recognises the value of different agreements, including joint PhD degrees and cotuelles, which appear in the international context as established mechanisms for enhanced research collaboration, co-supervision and enriching the graduate research experience.
- 1.2 Collaborative PhD opportunities enable the University to:
 - (a) advance international links for the delivery of excellence in research training of PhD candidates
 - (b) promote opportunities to strengthen and build international research collaborations
 - (c) enhance strategic engagements with partner institutions.
- 1.3 Collaborative PhD opportunities enable the PhD candidate to:
 - (a) enrol concurrently at two universities that have formed a strategic research partnership
 - (b) conduct their research project under joint supervision with access to complementary specialties and resources from multiple international institutions
 - (c) advance their international networks and benefit from excellence in research training in different countries.
- 1.4 This Policy should be read in conjunction with other policies pertaining to admissions, graduate research training, examinations, integrity and course awards certification. The following should also be utilised in the development of an agreement:
 - (a) Expression of Interest for a Collaborative PhD Agreement (Joint PhD or Cotutelle) template
 - (b) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards 2021).

2 Definitions

Collaborative PhD Degree Program refers to the different types of PhD available between institutions
Cotutelle is a single agreement to facilitate a co-supervision between a UWA supervisor and another supervisor at a separate institution

Home University refers to the primary institution of the candidate, normally where the PhD candidate spends the greatest portion of time in study and research leading to the completion of the award requirements.

Host University refers to the partner institution(s) to which the candidate travels and take up a minimum temporary residency to undertake an agreed part of their studies.

Joint PhD is an institutional agreement between UWA and another institution to jointly supervise PhD candidates over an agreed number of years and across a number of disciplinary areas

Partner Institution refers to the participating University working in collaboration with the University
University refers to *The University of Western Australia*

3 Scope

- 3.1 The scope of this policy applies to all PhD candidates (except those in combined doctoral degree courses), staff and the Graduate Research School.

4 Principles for Collaborative PhD Degree Agreements

- 4.1 The University offers collaborative PhD degree opportunities where they are of recognised benefit to the university's research strategy and to PhD candidates by:
 - (a) Enhancing research collaborations and links to global institutions, with priority given to high-ranking and/or existing partner institutions and network members, and PhD recruitment strategies.

- (b) Expanding the candidate's experience across research environments through complementary expertise, access to specialised facilities, additional training opportunities and increasing research impact.
 - (c) Strengthening the global visibility and reputation of the University's research and doctoral programs through jointly recognised qualifications and joint scholarly outputs.
- 4.2 The University maintains full autonomy over course delivery, ensuring consistent engagement and high-quality academic oversight through active supervision and dedicated candidate support, in collaboration with the partner institution.
- 4.3 To maintain the integrity and effectiveness of the program, robust quality assurance mechanisms must be in place. Programs are aligned with accreditation and regulatory requirements in all jurisdictions and are responsive to opportunities for continuous improvement.

5 Establishing an Agreement

- 5.1 The University recognises Joint PhDs as pan-institutional agreements intended to run over several years, involve a cohort of students and include several Schools. The Institutional Joint Agreement (IJA) sets out the extent and duration of institutional engagement and the general terms and conditions under which individual candidate specific agreements are developed. The IJA serves as the foundation for the collaboration and affirms the commitment to awarding a single, jointly conferred, degree.
- 5.2 The University recognises Cotutelle agreements as individual agreements to enable the co-supervision of a single candidate between UWA supervisors and another institution's supervisors for the award of a single collaborative PhD. A cotutelle requires an Individual Candidate Agreement (ICA) but may not require an Institutional Joint Agreement unless multiple candidates are envisaged over a number of years. A cotutelle represents a single degree award.
- 5.3 Proposals are submitted to the Graduate Research School as an Expression of Interest (EOI) The development of an EOI includes the following:
- (a) Due diligence undertaken by the School. This should be undertaken before consultation with the partner institution and should include consideration of; institutional profile and reputation; strategic fit with UWA; other candidate benefits such as industry linkages, research infrastructure, career development; existing collaboration between potential supervisors; scope of engagement i.e. number of candidates envisaged, number of UWA Schools to benefit; financial support; intellectual property; foreign interference and country-specific considerations in relation to current national security legislation
 - (b) Consultation with partner institution
 - (c) Final school review
 - (d) Approval of EOI for Institutional Joint Agreements by the Board of the Graduate Research School
 - (e) Approval of EOI for cotutelles by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training). As part of governance reporting, an annual list of the approved Cotutelles are submitted to the Board of the Graduate Research School for noting.
 - (f) The GRS will lodge a copy of the final agreement for both Institutional Joint Agreements and cotutelles with UWA's Record Services and noted in the Board's annual report to the Academic Board.

6 Admission and enrolment

- 6.1 Applicants must meet the eligibility and admission requirements to enrol in a full-time PhD degree course at both the host university and home university.
- 6.2 Enrolments into the Collaborative PhD Degree Program are subject to a fully executed institutional agreement and/or an approved individual candidature agreement.
- (a) A PhD candidate may enrol directly in a Joint PhD degree only after the agreement (IJA and ICA) is executed between the partner institutions.
 - (b) A PhD candidate may enrol directly into a cotutelle after an individual agreement has been executed by the two institutions as represented by the joint supervisory team.
 - (c) An enrolled PhD candidate may transfer into a Joint PhD degree within 18 months of commencement of the research component of their candidature at either the host or the home university, subject to a fully executed agreement and the development of a joint research proposal.
- 6.3 At partner institutions where there is a coursework component and/or a qualifying examination required to commence research, the start date of the PhD research is taken as the date of the candidate having been approved for research by the qualifying tests at the partner institution, Commencement of the collaborative PhD will be aligned with UWA candidature timelines and requirements.

- 6.4 Subject to Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Training) approval, a PhD candidate may transfer from a Joint/cotutelle PhD degree to a standard UWA PhD degree during their candidature if UWA is their home university.
- 6.5 The language of instruction at UWA is English. The host institution specifies their language(s) of instruction. If instruction is not English at the host institution, candidates must ensure they can meet the language proficiency requirements of both institutions.

7 Funding and Fees

- 7.1 Fee arrangements for each candidature must be documented in the individual candidature agreement.
- 7.2 International PhD candidates are liable for tuition fees at UWA, unless in receipt of a tuition fee scholarship. Australian citizens and permanent residents, and New Zealand citizens and permanent residents are eligible for an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) fees offset scholarship.
- 7.3 PhD students are responsible for meeting costs such as travel, visa, overseas health cover and living expenses.
- 7.4 All candidates are liable for the relevant Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) during their enrolment at UWA. The annual charge differs for research candidates during periods undertaking candidature overseas and for the duration of residency whilst located at UWA.
- 7.5 All international PhD candidates are covered by the ESOS Act 2024, including their liability for the Overseas Health Cover (OSHC) for the entire duration of the candidate visa in Australia.

8 Candidature and Supervision

- 8.1 A minimum total time of one year of the candidature is to be spent at each institution whilst fulfilling the minimum duration of candidature. Candidates must ensure that their application for the Collaborative PhD Degree Program includes a draft timetable for the time planned at each institution.
- 8.2 Candidates enrolled under an agreement must have ongoing joint supervision from both institutions for the duration of the candidature. At least two UWA supervisors are appointed in accordance with the University Graduate Research Training Policy. Candidates are subject to both institutions' policies, rules and regulations. Where variations to standard policies or rules are required, either prior to commencement of, or during candidature, variations must be approved by both institutions and documented in the individual candidature agreement.
- 8.3 Supervisors are responsible for the ongoing monitoring and progress of candidates enrolled in the program under their guidance, regardless of the candidate's physical location.

9 Examination, graduation and testamur

- 9.1 All students must meet the minimum examination components at UWA to be conferred a UWA award. Where possible the institutional agreement will aim to streamline components to concurrently meet the requirements of the partner institution.
- 9.2 A candidate whose thesis does not satisfy the examination requirements of one institution remains eligible for a single doctoral award from the other institution, subject to that institution's discretion and academic regulations.
- 9.3 PhD candidates graduating from a joint PhD degree normally only receive their award certificate at the home university graduation ceremony. UWA policy UP 21/17 allows for a testamur to be provided when UWA has been nominated as the home institution in the individual candidate agreement. All candidates will receive an AHEGS that acknowledges the joint nature of the award.
- 9.4 A PhD candidate who attends a graduation ceremony at the partner institution may not also attend a UWA graduation ceremony. Their award is conferred in absentia.
- 9.5 Testamurs and academic transcripts must each state that the degree was undertaken jointly between the home Institution and the host Institution in accordance with the procedures of the Courses Award Certification policy.

10 Monitoring of review and improvement

- 10.1 Agreements are monitored, and reports about governance, risk, candidate progress and outcomes are annually reported for noting by the BGRS to the Academic Board via the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.
- 10.2 The relevant Schools are responsible for the ongoing monitoring, review and improvement of their agreements. Schools are expected to liaise with the Graduate Research School on an ongoing basis to jointly review and report on the progression of agreements, any matters relating to candidates

enrolled and any proposed changes to agreements.

11 Renewal or Termination of an Institutional Agreement

- 11.1 Institutional agreements due to expire are reviewed for renewal/non-renewal at least six months prior to expiration.
- 11.2 If an Institutional agreement is to be terminated prior to expiry date, the process for termination follows the specifications of the agreement, including clauses pertaining to the management of existing candidates.

12 Grievances

- 12.1 Candidates enrolled in a joint/cotutelle PhD can access UWA appeals and grievances mechanisms. Candidates are responsible for consulting the University Policy on Review and Appeal of Academic Decisions for Courses Managed by the Graduate Research School.
