



# Akademisches Auslandsamt / International Office

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## GENERAL INFORMATION / CHECKLIST FOR A BINATIONAL DOCTORAL EXAMINATION PROCEDURE (COTUTELLE)

### Background information

A binational doctoral procedure – also known as a Cotutelle procedure – enables a doctoral candidate to obtain a doctorate from two universities in two different countries based on a single research project completed at both universities.

The Cotutelle procedure is binational in terms of the supervision of the doctoral thesis, the research project, which is carried out almost equally at two universities, and the participation of foreign reviewers/examiners in the final defence. For the award of a joint doctoral degree, the two cooperating universities must agree on a legally binding procedure by concluding a cooperation agreement in which the Cotutelle procedure is regulated in detail.

After successful completion of the Cotutelle procedure, two individual doctoral certificates are issued; stating that the doctorate awarded by Otto von Guericke University (OVGU) and the doctorate awarded at the foreign university were awarded as part of a joint doctoral procedure. Upon receipt of the doctoral certificate, the doctoral candidate is entitled to use either the German doctoral title or the doctoral title of the foreign university (stating the name).

For the avoidance of doubt, it should be noted that the doctoral candidate cannot be awarded two doctoral degrees based on one dissertation. Instead, a single doctoral degree is awarded in accordance with the doctoral degree regulations of the faculties of OVGU and the partner institution.

### The target group

The Cotutelle is of particular interest to candidates who:

- want to establish themselves in a specific academic field in two countries,
- are conducting research on a topic that is closely related to a foreign country,
- have not yet decided in which country they want to continue their academic work later,
- want to continue their academic career in a binational context.

If a doctoral candidate only intends to involve an academic supervisor from a foreign university in the examination committee and/or to complete a research stay abroad, such agreements can be made within the framework of the doctoral regulations. In this case, the Cotutelle procedure is neither necessary nor useful.

### **Formal requirements**

The basic prerequisite for a Cotutelle procedure is the applicant's admission to the doctoral programs at OVGU and at the chosen foreign university. In addition, the legal requirements for a Cotutelle procedure must be fulfilled. The respective paragraph of the faculties' doctoral regulations, which regulates the requirements for joint doctorates with foreign universities as part of a Cotutelle procedure, serves as the basis for all binational doctorates. However, an individual cooperation agreement must be concluded for each binational doctoral project.

For this purpose, the cooperating universities must agree on the Cotutelle procedure to be used at faculty level and, in the case of some universities at another level. In each individual case, the supervisor must clarify the possibilities for a Cotutelle procedure together with the respective doctoral committees of OVGU and the partner university.

Although a general cooperation agreement between two faculties or universities can provide the basic features of a Cotutelle procedure, i.e. how institutional relationships or personal contacts facilitate mutual understanding in the work, it is still necessary to draw up an individual agreement. To draw up such an agreement, please use the model agreement provided by OVGU and agreed with the Legal Department. If the model agreement is changed or if a document from the partner, university is used, it must be checked and approved by the OVGU's Cotutelle Officer.

## Which topics should be regulated in a cooperation agreement?

Taking into account the doctoral regulations of the participating universities, a cooperation agreement should regulate the following points of the joint doctoral program:

### Academic supervision

One professor from each of the two participating faculties must provide academic supervision of the doctoral thesis. Both faculties undertake to ensure the academic supervision of the dissertation and to make the appropriate arrangements. Candidates must complete a research stay at both universities. The research stay must last at least one year at each of the two universities.

### Matriculation

Prospective doctoral candidates must be enrolled at both universities. Any enrolment fees must only be paid at one university. This is usually the home university that offers the doctoral program. Semester fees are excluded

### Examination procedure

The PhD thesis can be submitted for defence either at the international university or at OVGU (details of the examination procedure are to be regulated in the cooperation agreement).

### Language

The language of the dissertation, the defence and the summary to be submitted must be specified. If the dissertation is submitted to OVGU, it must be written in German or English and include an abstract in the language of the foreign university. If the dissertation is submitted to the foreign university/faculty, the summary must be written in either German and/or English.

### Grades

Due to different assessment cultures, a uniform common assessment often proves to be difficult. It is generally recommended to indicate both the German grade and its equivalent in the foreign grading system. It is advisable to include the grading system in the contract.

### Travel expenses and costs for research stays

It should be clarified exactly which costs will be borne by the two faculties involved so that third party funding can be applied for if necessary.

## Checklist

Process steps	Person(s) responsible/involved
Initial coordination of the planned binational doctoral project together with the responsible doctoral committee and the International Office.	Doctoral supervisor Head of the Doctoral Committee International Office
Clarification of the legal framework and the necessary regulations at the partner university.	PhD candidate Doctoral supervisor
Provision of the model agreement	International Office
Preparation of an individual cooperation agreement based on the model agreement. Submission of the draft agreement to the International Office.	Doctoral supervisor
Submission of an application for admission to the doctoral program at OVGU and an application for admission to the doctoral program at the partner university.	PhD candidate
Formal review of the agreement by the International Office. In the case of discrepancies, the International Office shall have the agreement reviewed by the Legal Department.	International Office Legal Office, if necessary Dean's Office
Submission of the agreement to the Doctoral Committee via the Dean's Office for a final decision.	Dean's Office Doctoral Committee
After approval by the doctoral committee, all parties will sign the agreement.	All contractual parties
The International Office sends six copies of the agreement to the partner university for signature. The partner university sends three signed copies to the International Office.	International Office
A copy of the signed agreement is forwarded to the Dean's Office and to the PhD candidate.	International Office

If you have further questions about the Cotutelle procedure and the agreement, please contact:

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