



Cotutelle de thèse

Factsheet: Binational doctoral cooperation agreements in the European Higher Education Area

I. What is a cotutelle de thèse?

A cotutelle de thèse is determined by the fact that doctoral candidates are enrolled at two universities ("partner universities") of different European countries. They pursue a double degree in accordance with the doctoral regulations of both institutions but only submit one doctoral thesis for joint evaluation by the partner universities.

II. Preconditions

The cotutelle is initiated by the doctoral candidate and requires the agreement of a first supervisor in Basel. At the very least, the following requirements must be met in order to apply for a cotutelle:

- a. The doctoral candidate has already been admitted to doctoral studies at one of the potential partner universities.
- b. The partner universities belong to the [European Higher Education Area](#) (including Israel).
- c. The doctorate was not started (enrollment date) at either institution later than 10 months ago.
- d. At least half of the expected doctoral period must be actively spent at the home university and a total of at least 12 months at the host university. (The "home university" is the university at which the doctoral candidate enrolled first, is employed or has received a full scholarship, and which bears the main administrative responsibility.)

III. Process

1. Application to the Vice President's Office for Education

The above-mentioned points must be confirmed in the application to the Graduate Center in the Vice President's Office for Education (VOE), and the added scientific value must be explained. The doctoral candidate must ensure that the following letters are enclosed with the application:

- a. Letter of motivation (signed by the doctoral candidate): Why do you want to carry out the project in the framework of a cotutelle? Why is permanent binational supervision indispensable for the success of the project? Why does the doctoral thesis require an institutional connection to two research locations? How should the institutional connection to two universities be organized (e.g. participation in events of a doctoral program, exchange with an existing research group, etc.)? Does a network or cooperation with the host university already exist or would a new one be established?
- b. Two letters of recommendation (signed by the main supervisors of both universities): Do both parties want to establish the agreement and welcome intensive cooperation? Why is double supervision indispensable for the development of the thesis? Are there also advantages for the supervisors involved and for the partner universities? .



2. Approval

After approval by the VOE, the involved faculty (Dean's Office) will also examine the application and, when indicated, approve the cotutelle procedure

In a next step, at least the two main supervisors (and possibly other members of the individual doctoral committee) must be admitted by the faculty's doctoral committee as supervisors for Basel in order to assess the doctoral thesis and oral performance. This entails submitting the first two pages of the doctoral agreement (the so-called cover sheet), signed by both the doctoral candidate and the first supervisor, to the faculty's Student Administration Office.

3. Agreement template

With the approval of the cotutelle model and the two main supervisors, the doctoral candidate will receive a template in German from the VOE or a bilingual version (German/English), if need be. If Basel is host university, the home university hands over the contract template to the doctoral candidate. The preparation of the agreement can begin immediately, even if the final version may only be signed after admission to doctoral studies at both universities.

4. Enrolment ('Immatrikulation')

The doctoral candidate must be enrolled at the University of Basel (see Article 1) and Student Services must be informed of the intention to carry out the doctorate as a cotutelle (including details of the home university). Please note: the status of a 'guest researcher' is not sufficient; you must be enrolled as a doctoral candidate.

5. Review of agreement

The VOE consults with the responsible administrative person of the host university and makes sure that both parties accept the final draft version before it is then examined by the responsible Dean's Office and, if necessary, by Legal Service of the University of Basel.

6. Signatures

Once both institutions have approved the agreement, it can be signed. As a rule, the doctoral candidate signs first, then the listed persons in hierarchical order. Deviations are possible upon justification. The cooperation agreement must be completely signed no later than the third semester after enrolment.

7. Documents

The doctoral candidate and the responsible Dean's Office of the University of Basel each receive one of the original documents, the host university the remaining originals. In addition, the VOE will send a scan of the contract to all signing supervisors of the University of Basel.

8. Doctoral exam

The exam will take place at the home university. Individually negotiated exceptions, e. g. when Basel is home university but the examination takes place at the host university, are possible upon justification in case of illness and other health issues, for financial and career-related reasons.

9. Diploma

Upon successful completion, the doctoral candidate receives a diploma from each of the two universities with a note stating that the doctorate was carried out as a cotutelle.



IV. Financial aspects

1. One-off registration fee and semester fees

All doctoral candidates pay a one-off registration fee of CHF 100. As a rule, the regular semester fees during the doctoral studies only have to be paid at the home university: cf. [Costs](#). Student Services only exempt doctoral candidates with an external home university from the semester fees if all parties sign the agreement and the fee waiver is regulated accordingly.

2. Insurance

Doctoral candidates are subject to the social security regulations in force in both countries. Sufficient insurance coverage (illness, accident, liability to third parties) is the responsibility of the doctoral candidate. Further information: [Insurance](#).

3. Financial support

The financing of cotutelle-induced costs for doctoral candidates and supervisors must be clarified before the start of the cotutelle and is mentioned in the agreement. *swissuniversities* awards grants on behalf of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SBFI) for cotutelles if the involved Swiss university is the home university. The call for proposals will be published each autumn (usually at the end of October) and the *deadline for submissions is 31 March*. Applications for funding must be submitted to cotutelle@unibas.ch on 1 March each year. We recommend to start with the preparation of the agreement at least 6 months before this date. Info page: [swissuniversities](#).

Contact at the University of Basel

Please first address your queries to:
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