Cotutelle de thèse
Information sheet for binational cooperation agreements in the European Higher Education Area

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.

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:

- The doctoral candidate has already been admitted to doctoral studies at one of the potential partner universities.
- The partner universities belong to the European Higher Education Area (including Israel).
- The doctorate was not started (enrollment date) at either institution later than 12 months ago.
- 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.)

Process

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

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

1. 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 essential for the success of the project? Is there already a network or cooperation with the host university or would a new one be established?
2. Letter 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 essential for the development of the thesis? Are there also advantages for the supervisors involved and for the partner universities?
3. If Basel is not the home university, the template for cotutelle agreements of the guest university must be attached.
2. Approval
After approval by the VOE, the involved faculty (Dean’s Office) will also examine the application and approve the cotutelle procedure. If Basel is the host university, the agreement template of the home university will be checked for compatibility with the doctoral regulations of the respective faculty.
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 (so-called cover sheet), signed by both the doctoral candidate and the first supervisor, to the faculty’s Student Administration Office.

3. Control slip ('Laufzettel') und agreement template
With the approval of the cotutelle model and the two main supervisors, the doctoral candidate will receive a control slip ('Laufzettel') from the VOE as well as a template in German or a bilingual version (German/English), if need be. 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 ‘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 to all parties mentioned in the control slip.

8. Doctoral exam
The exam will take place at the home university. Individually negotiated exceptions, for ex. when we are home university but the examination takes place at the host university, are possible 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.
Financial aspects

One-off registration fee and semester fees
All doctoral candidates pay a one-off registration fee of CHF 100. As a rule, the semester fees only have to be paid at the home university: Costs. Student Services only exempts you from the semester fees if all parties sign the agreement and the fee waiver is regulated accordingly.

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

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 the relevant contact person in the VOE 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 person at the University of Basel

Please first address your queries to: Frau Dr. Manuela Rossini
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