

Cotutelle Agreements – Guidelines for Memorial University of Newfoundland

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Approved by Memorial University Senate December 14, 2010

1. Summary

- Cotutelle agreements allow for students to earn two doctoral degrees through a single research project from institutions in different countries.
- Rationale for Memorial: Enhanced student mobility, international research networks, institutional reputation, student recruitment, international relations, quality of doctoral student training and experience.
- Guidelines for cotutelle agreements must be met in order for cotutelle agreement to be approved by Memorial.
- Checklist for cotutelle agreements should be followed in establishing the written contract.
- Process for establishing agreement: student/faculty identifies cotutelle opportunity and partner institution → approaches SGS → development of agreement → review by appropriate parties → sign-off by appropriate parties → program delivery → fulfillment of requirements and award of degree
- Oversight for cotutelle agreements in SGS at Memorial and Graduate Dean's Office in partner institution.

2. Overview

Definition

A cotutelle or “co-tutoring” agreement allows a single doctoral student to pursue doctoral studies and a joint research project at two universities (usually in different countries) under the co-supervision of faculty from each country/institution. The agreement normally allows the student to earn a joint or double doctoral degree upon completion of program.

Rationale

The Council of Graduate Schools notes the importance of graduate research collaboration and partnerships:

Greater international collaboration at the graduate level is indispensable to the advancement of scholarship and science. Participation in such collaborative work, whether through formal degree programs or through more informal research exchanges, also prepares students for a future in which research is destined to become truly global.¹

Cotutelle agreements are seen as an important means of internationalizing graduate education. They are strategically aligned with Memorial University's priorities to add international components to its programs, increase international exchange opportunities that are of high academic value, and enhance international student recruitment. Cotutelle agreements allow for greater student mobility and add an important international studies component to the doctoral program of study. They also encourage research collaborations between Memorial students and faculty and international peers.

¹ Council of Graduate Schools. (2010). *Joint Degrees, Dual Degrees, and International Research Collaborations: A Report on the CGS Graduate International Collaborations Project*. Washington, D.C.: Council of Graduate Schools.

While it is unclear how many universities in Canada engage in cotutelle agreements with foreign institutions, a recent survey on the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada listserv along with a scan of institutional websites suggest there are at least 7 universities that enter into such agreements. Anecdotal evidence also suggests interest in these types of agreements and programs is growing. The majority of agreements appear to be by universities in Quebec with partner institutions in France. Some universities in English speaking Canada follow guidelines for establishing cotutelle agreements. Internationally, the practice of issuing joint or double doctoral degrees through cotutelle is very prominent, particularly in the EU and Australia.

General Information

Under a cotutelle agreement, a doctoral student would normally be required to register at both Memorial and the cooperating institution for the duration of his/her program, but pay fees at only one institution (the "home institution" or the university the doctoral student was initially admitted to). Ancillary fees (i.e., health and dental insurance and recreation fee at Memorial) will normally be paid at whichever institution the student is in residence for a given semester. At Memorial, the student will have to opt out of health and dental and recreation charges by the appropriate deadlines for the semesters he/she is not in St. John's. Once completed the program, the student will earn separate doctoral degrees from both Memorial and the cooperating institution. It will be noted on the degree certificate and the academic transcript that the degree was awarded through a cotutelle agreement. Specific details are normally negotiated for each student's program by the student, supervisors, and institutions and are reflected in the agreement document.

"Memorial's Guidelines for Cotutelle Agreements" (see section 3) will describe the specific requirements that must be fulfilled before a PhD student at Memorial or another recognized institution may enter into a joint or double degree program through a cotutelle agreement.

3. Guidelines for Cotutelle Agreements

Memorial University recognizes that double doctoral degree programs made possible through cotutelle agreements are an important means of internationalizing graduate education and the graduate experience. Memorial University requires the following guidelines be met when establishing a cotutelle agreement with a cooperating institution:

- Cotutelle agreements are made for individual doctoral students between Memorial and another recognized institution.
- Acceptable supervisors from both Memorial and a cooperating institution must agree to sign the cotutelle agreement.
- The doctoral student is expected to carry out graduate work and research at both institutions in alternating periods.
- An annual report will be submitted by the student to the School of Graduate Studies at Memorial and equivalent office at the cooperating institution to ensure progress is made and residency requirements are fulfilled. The information in these reports would also be used to address concerns in and improve the quality of double doctoral programs involving Memorial.
- The thesis will normally be written in English unless specified differently in the cotutelle agreement.
- The thesis is examined separately through the normal process at Memorial and at the cooperating institution.
- The doctoral student is registered both at Memorial and at the cooperating institution for the duration of his/her program. However, the student will only be required to pay tuition fees at one institution (the "home institution"). Ancillary fees (i.e., health and dental insurance and recreation fee) will normally be paid at whichever institution the student is in residence for a given semester. At Memorial, the student will have to opt out of health and dental and recreation charges by the appropriate deadlines for the semesters he/she is not in St. John's.
- Upon successful completion of the program, Memorial and the cooperating institution will each issue its own doctoral degree certificate. On the certificate and subsequently on the university transcript,

the following notation will be added: “This PhD was awarded within a cotutelle agreement. The student was jointly enrolled at University XYZ and Memorial University of Newfoundland and successfully completed the degree requirements of both institutions.”

The following checklist, derived with permission from the “York University Checklist for Establishing a Cotutelle Agreement”, can be used as a planning resource:²

- Participating institutions: opening section identifies universities signing agreement represented by a senior administrator (e.g., president, vice-president) of each institution, the specific university units and individuals participating in the agreement, the doctoral supervisors, the student, the area of specialization, and the thesis topic/title. Mail and email addresses and telephone and fax numbers are included.
- Administrative details: The following items can appear as separate articles or clustered thematically:
 - Start and anticipated duration of agreement.
 - Anticipated division of studies (dates and duration of student’s attendance in home and host institutions; normally minimum stay at host institution is 3 full semesters).
 - Details on payment of tuition fees. Student is normally registered at both universities but pays tuition to only the “home institution”. Ancillary fees (i.e., health and dental insurance and recreation fee) will normally be paid at whichever institution the student is in residence for a given semester. At Memorial, the student will have to opt out of health and dental and recreation charges by the appropriate deadlines for the semesters he/she is not in St. John’s.
 - Details on financial support for student (including information related to any relevant collective agreements and how seniority for graduate student employment will be calculated).
 - Funding arrangements for supervisors and examiners, including funding for thesis defense.
 - Identification of and written confirmation from parties responsible for arranging housing, paying travel expenses, and ensuring insurance coverage for student.
 - Information on admission requirements, application process, and visa requirements for study at host institution.
 - Information on health and dental insurance coverage for student.
 - A clause stating that the decision to award the degree by one of the institutions is not binding upon the other.
 - A statement addressing procedures to be followed in the event of any disruption in the academic activity of either institution.
- Pedagogical details: The following items can appear as separate articles or clustered thematically:
 - Designation of thesis supervisor in each institution and any other members of supervisory committee; explanation of the process leading to development, submission, and approval of research plan and thesis proposal, including all ethics and risk management approvals.
 - Listing of any degree requirements beyond the thesis/dissertation for the home and host institutions (courses, comprehensive exams, etc.).
 - Statement on expectations around preparation of regular progress reports for or by the student.
 - Procedures at each institution for the submission and examination of the thesis/dissertation.
 - Composition of the thesis examination committee and the institution where the thesis/dissertation defense is to be held.
 - Language in which the thesis/dissertation will be written and defended; language in which the abstract will be written; language in which the oral defense statement will be given; language of examination comments/reports.
 - Statement that the candidate, supervisors, and both institutions will comply with relevant IP policies and dispute resolution procedures, should there be any inconsistencies between the two institutions.
 - Information on code of conduct expectations and procedures for student misconduct (personal and research); information on guidelines related to grievance, appeal, and termination.

² Memorial University wishes to thank York University for allowing us to adapt York’s “Checklist for Establishing a Cotutelle Agreement” in order to develop our own cotutelle checklist.

- Statement on regulations at each institution regarding the filing, registration of copyright, and reproduction of thesis.
- Statement confirming degree will be awarded by each institution.
- Statement verifying that student's transcript from each institution will acknowledge the degree is part of a cotutelle agreement. The notation will read: "This PhD was awarded within a cotutelle agreement. The student was jointly enrolled at University XYZ and Memorial University of Newfoundland and successfully completed the degree requirements of both institutions."
- Signatures: The following sign and date the agreement for and on behalf of each institution: President (or delegate), Dean of Graduate Studies, supervisor, Head of academic unit, and student; one original will be sent to the cooperating institution for signatures.

4. Process for Establishing Cotutelle Agreement

1. After being formally admitted, the doctoral student at Memorial will express interest in entering a cotutelle agreement to the Dean of Graduate Studies. In a case where a student is first admitted to a doctoral program at another recognized institution, he/she will follow the procedures of that university in establishing cotutelles and in accordance with Memorial's guidelines.
2. An agreement will be drafted and vetted by the School of Graduate Studies, Office of the Registrar, Legal Counsel, and the Office of the Associate Vice-President Academic.
3. Once approved in principle, two original documents will be distributed for signature by the President (or delegate), Dean of Graduate Studies, supervisor at Memorial, Head of academic unit, and student; one original will be sent to the cooperating institution for signatures.