

## Information concerning the *co-tutelle de thèse*

### Definition

A "*co-tutelle de thèse*" is a bi-national doctorate project in which two professors from universities in two countries supervise a dissertation and both universities jointly award the doctoral degree. The doctoral student divides her/his research between both universities. In accordance with the overall rule that "**one scientific achievement merits one academic title**" (not two), the ensuing dissertation will be defended before a committee of representatives from both universities, and both universities will recognize the thesis (cf. <https://www.hrk.de/hrk-international/mobility-and-mutual-recognition/cotutelle/>). Afterwards, both universities jointly issue a doctoral diploma - or two diplomas referring to each other and only valid in conjunction with each other.

Further criteria:

- An individual *co-tutelle*-agreement (see below) has to be instituted for each project. So even if doctoral regulations do not explicitly provide for a "*co-tutelle de thèse*", the bi-national project can be individually established, since the agreement has to comply with the respective doctoral regulations at both universities.
- A *co-tutelle* and its bi-national supervision are to be established at the beginning of the research period; a retroactive recognition of a national dissertation by a second university does not constitute a "*co-tutelle de thèse*".
- A *co-tutelle*-agreement does not require a formal partnership between both universities, since a *co-tutelle* is not a bi-national course of studies, but an individual project.

### Preconditions:

- The doctoral candidate is responsible for finding supervisors at both universities and negotiating the dissertation topic with them.
- The doctoral candidate has to be eligible as a degree candidate at both universities and has to be registered and enrolled at both universities (cf. <https://www.studying.uni-mainz.de/doctorate/>)
- The conditions of the doctoral project have to be cleared with the supervisors and doctoral examination boards at both universities (at JGU, the *Promotionsprüfungsamt* is the Dean's Office of the respective *Fachbereich*), since the conditions have to comply with the doctoral regulations at both universities.

These conditions have to be laid down in an individual *co-tutelle*-agreement (see below). They have to be resolved before the signing of an agreement if JGU is involved.

### The *co-tutelle* agreement:

Templates for *co-tutelle* agreements are available from [europa@international.uni-mainz.de](mailto:europa@international.uni-mainz.de).

The *co-tutelle* agreement has to settle the following details:

- topic and joint supervision of the dissertation
- enrollment at both universities
- tuition payments (tuition is waived at one of the two universities)
- potential financial support and funding e.g. for travel expenses of committee members
- French templates often also include social insurances and accommodation in the agreement; however, this is not mandatory
- first and foremost the examination conditions, e.g. composition of the dissertation committee; language, mode and defense of the dissertation; etc. In the past, these details have not proved to

be problematic – German doctoral regulations often provide for external reviewers or committee members anyway, for instance. Setting down the language of the dissertation is important, though – if the examination regulations permit a dissertation to be written in German or English only, for example, then the summary may be written in French, but not the actual thesis. However, usually active support from the dissertation supervisors leads to viable solutions.

- the mutual recognition of the doctoral diploma. Ideally, a bilingual diploma is awarded, or a diploma with both versions facing each other and emphasizing that the degree is awarded jointly and that one diploma (e.g. the German version) is not valid without the other (e.g. the French version). Thus, the doctoral diploma should mention not only the joint supervision of the thesis, but also the joint awarding of the degree. If a country issues immutable national doctoral diplomas (as is the case in France, for example), then at least both universities have to issue a joint doctoral document or diplomas referring to each other.

The *co-tutelle* agreement has to be composed in the languages of both universities (or in English) and has to be signed by the following representatives of both universities:

- the doctoral candidate,
- the dissertation supervisor,
- the Dean (i.e. the director of the doctoral examination board),
- the President or Rector

Each university involved will receive at least one original of the agreement (often the supervisors and the doctoral candidate will also receive an original); a copy of the agreement signed by all parties involved has to be sent to the International Office of JGU.

The *co-tutelle* agreement affords the opportunity to address legal concerns in each individual case. An agreement which meets all regulations of the German doctoral examination board allows the doctoral candidate to complete a national German doctoral degree (and vice versa) even if there should be a conflict between both supervisors or if a supervisor withdraws from the project.

#### **Financial support and scholarships:**

- Support within JGU: <https://www.studying.uni-mainz.de/costs-funding-and-aid/>
- Scholarships for doctoral research abroad from the state of Rhineland-Palatinate: <https://www.international.uni-mainz.de/landesstipendienstiftung/>
- DAAD scholarships for bi-national dissertation projects: <https://www.daad.de/ausland/studieren/stipendium/de/70-stipendien-finden-und-bewerben/> (database available in German only)
- Travel grants from the French-German University for German-French dissertation projects: <https://www.dfh-ufa.org/informationen-fuer/studierende-doktoranden-alumni/doktoranden/cotutelle-de-these/> or [https://www.dfh-ufa.org/fr/vous-etes/etudiant-doctorant-diplome/doctorant/cotutelle-de-these/?noredirect=fr\\_FR](https://www.dfh-ufa.org/fr/vous-etes/etudiant-doctorant-diplome/doctorant/cotutelle-de-these/?noredirect=fr_FR)