

Policy on Joint and Dual Doctoral Awards

Introduction

1. Definitions

- a. A **joint doctoral award** is one which leads to a single award for a research degree programme which is jointly offered by the partner institutions. The single award certificate will be endorsed by all partners.
- b. A **dual doctoral award** is one which leads to separate awards from two partner institutions involved in a joint research degree programme. Each award certificate will refer to the joint programme.

2. The definitions given in Section 1 are those in use at the University of Bristol, and such arrangements may be known by other names at different institutions. For example, a dual award may also be known as a double award. It is therefore important to establish with potential partner institutions a common understanding of the terminology used and the nature of the proposed award.¹
3. The University permits joint or dual doctoral awards **only** when the criteria specified in Part A below are satisfied.
4. Multiple awards are not permitted by the University.
5. While a joint or dual doctoral award arrangement for an individual student is permitted, the resource-intensive nature of such arrangements means that proposals of this kind will be scrutinised with particular care for strategic and academic value.
6. All prospective partners must be made aware of this policy and of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*² at the outset of any negotiations.

Clear agreement must be reached at an early stage on whether the proposal is for a joint or dual award, as defined in section 1 of this policy. The University of Bristol permits both types.

8. This policy should be read and implemented in conjunction with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, with particular reference to *Chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others* and *Chapter B11: Research degrees*, and to the QAA Characteristics Statement, *Qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body* (2015)

A. Criteria for setting up joint or dual doctoral awards

9. The University will normally only consider proposals for joint or dual doctoral awards where the proposed partners are leading research universities, although an exception may be made where there is a compelling strategic reason for partnering with a variety of universities.

¹ See also definitions used in the QAA Characteristics Statement, *Qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body* (2015): <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Joint-Degree-Characteristics-15.pdf>

² <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/cop-research-degrees.html>

10. The proposed research programme must be in an area of disciplinary excellence or build on a strong established research link.
11. A proposal for a joint or dual doctoral award must have the full support of the relevant faculty or faculties, and be able to demonstrate that it meets at least 2 of the following criteria:
 - a. It offers long-term strategic benefits for the University (for example, increased student recruitment, increased income, access to new sources of funding, opportunities for academic exchange);
 - b. It will help to raise the University's global brand and reputation;
 - c. It will deepen an existing research relationship and has the potential to involve more than one discipline;
 - d. It involves cohorts of students rather than a single individual.
12. Where relevant, the University must be satisfied that any national expectations for the academic standards of doctoral awards and the training of research students are met by the proposed partner, and that any professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) requirements are taken into account.

B. Procedure for the approval of joint or dual doctoral awards

13. If the proposal for a joint or dual award relates to a bid for an externally-funded Doctoral Training Centre/Partnership, this aspect will be handled by the Academic Registry as part of the bid process. The Academic Quality and Policy Office within the Academic Registry should be notified at the earliest possible opportunity in order to coordinate arrangements for approval of the proposal for the joint or dual award. Approval must be confirmed before the bid is submitted.
14. In all other cases, the proposer should do the following:
 - a. Contact the Academic Quality and Policy Office, for initial advice and guidance about the approval process and the regulatory framework;
 - b. Where appropriate, also contact the International Office for advice on the standing of a prospective overseas partner;
 - c. Prepare their case for approval, using the template provided (**Proposal Form for Joint and Dual Doctoral Awards**)³ Include a statement of support from the relevant Dean or Deans
 - d. Include a statement of commitment from the partner institution *including confirmation of its legal right and capacity to make joint or dual awards*;
 - e. Submit their case to the Academic Quality and Policy Office for coordination of approval by the Academic Director of Graduate Studies (ADGS), Chair of the Educational Partnership Evaluation Group.
15. If the proposal for the joint or dual award relates to any application for external funding other than a Doctoral Training Centre/Partnership (such as a European Joint Doctorate bid under the Innovative Training Network - Horizon 2020 - Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions scheme), the Academic Quality and Policy Office should be notified at the earliest possible opportunity for advice and guidance on submitting the internal proposal. Approval for the joint or dual award must be confirmed before the bid is submitted. Completed proposals must therefore be submitted **at least two weeks** prior to the bid deadline at the very latest in order to allow for sufficient consideration of the proposal.

³ <http://www.bris.ac.uk/academic-quality/edpart/>

16. The Academic Quality and Policy Office will carry out a risk assessment of the proposal and ensure that appropriate due diligence is conducted, liaising with the Academic Lead, with other professional services and with the partner institution as appropriate, in accordance with the procedures for educational collaborative arrangements.
17. The ADGS will then review the proposal and will make a recommendation to the PVC (Education & Students) for final approval. *Proposals initiated by another institution will be subject to particularly careful scrutiny to ensure that the arrangement meets the University of Bristol criteria.*
18. If approved, the Academic Quality and Policy Office will coordinate the drawing up of the appropriate agreements in conjunction with the Secretary's Office to ensure legal validity, with the Academic Lead and with the partner institution.
19. All approvals of joint or dual awards and the subsequent sign-off of any agreements will be reported to the Educational Partnership Evaluation Group and on to Education Committee.

C. General Principles

20. The University is responsible for the academic standards and quality of all awards made in its name.
21. For all joint and dual awards, there must be a written agreement between the University of Bristol and the other degree-awarding institution involved in the joint programme, which confirms that the partner institutions have the legal right and capacity to make joint or dual awards and sets out, *inter alia*:
 - a. the nature of the doctoral programme;
 - b. the award(s) that will be made on successful completion of the programme;
 - c. the arrangements for registration of the students and the fees payable to each party;
 - d. the regulatory framework (see also section 22 below);
 - e. the arrangements for academic supervision and assessment at both partner institutions;
 - f. arrangements for the wording and production of the award certificate(s) and transcript so that appropriate and clear reference is made to the joint or dual nature of the award and to both collaborating institutions⁴.
22. The requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*⁵ apply to all students registered with Bristol on joint or dual doctoral degrees. This includes requirements for induction, supervision, appropriateness of the research environment, skills training, progress monitoring and assessment. The written agreement (see section 21 above) will make reference to these Regulations, to the partner institution's equivalent regulations, and to how regulations and procedures will apply for the purposes of the joint or dual degree, as agreed between the partners.
23. The doctoral candidate selection decision will always be made by both partner institutions involved in the joint or dual award, in accordance with admissions criteria agreed between them. Any student admitted to Bristol for a joint or dual PhD must meet the normal minimum entry requirements of the University.

⁴ See also *Regulations and Code of Practice for Educational Collaborative Arrangements* section 10.12 (award certificates and transcripts).

⁵ <http://www.bris.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/cop-research-degrees.html>

24. Clear and explicit information must always be provided in recruitment materials as to the nature of the award and attendance requirements at each awarding institution. Information provided to students on joint or dual degrees must make clear the roles of the awarding institutions, appropriate points of contact at each institution, confirmation of the lead supervisor, fee arrangements and other relevant arrangements, including complaints and appeals procedures and arrangements for the final examination and graduation.
25. Students on joint or dual degrees must be registered at the University for the entire duration of the joint programme of study, and must normally spend a minimum period of 30% of the programme in attendance at the University.⁶
26. In the event that the joint or dual award arrangement breaks down, it will be possible for the student to transfer to a Bristol-only programme with the approval of the relevant Graduate Education Director. The Educational Partnership Evaluation Group will be notified of any such cases. However, it is not normally possible for a student admitted to a Bristol-only programme to transfer onto a joint or dual degree part-way through their studies.
27. Students studying for joint or dual degrees must have a supervisor from each of the awarding institutions and it should be clarified at the outset which is to act as the lead supervisor. Arrangements should be in place to ensure that the student meets jointly with their supervisors from both institutions (in person or by virtual means) on a regular basis.
28. The University Academic Lead for the proposal will normally be the intended University supervisor where the joint or dual award relates to an individual student. Where the proposal relates to a framework agreement to provide joint or dual awards for a number of students, the Academic Lead will be expected to maintain holistic oversight of the arrangement and to act as the overall point of contact for other University supervisors of doctoral students under the arrangement, as well as for the partner institution.
29. The final assessment of the doctoral dissertation is by a single examination involving internal examiners from both awarding institutions, as well as an examiner external to both. Supervisors may observe the examination but may not act as examiners. The location of and arrangements for the final examination will be agreed between the University and the partner institution and set out in the written agreement. Some partner institutions will have particular requirements, for example for a public defence.
30. For *joint* awards, the award is jointly approved by both awarding institutions and is jointly issued by means of a single certificate. For *dual* awards, a decision by the partner institution to award a degree is not binding upon the University, and vice versa. In the event that there is not agreement between the two institutions, a single award may be made by one institution, and the candidate may appeal the decision of the non-awarding institution under their applicable procedures.

D. Procedure for the review of joint or dual doctoral award arrangements

31. Where a joint or dual award arrangement relates to an individual student or a single small cohort of students, the Educational Partnership Evaluation Group may request a brief mid-point or final report

⁶ See also Section 4.2 (Registration) of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*

from the Academic Lead to ensure there is appropriate and proportionate institutional oversight of, and learning from, the delivery of such arrangements.

32. Where the proposal relates to a larger scale arrangement such as an ongoing framework agreement to provide joint or dual awards for a number of students, the Educational Partnership Evaluation Group will carry out a periodic review of the arrangement in accordance with the **Periodic Review and Renewal Process for Educational Collaborative Arrangements**.⁷

⁷ <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/edpart/>