GUIDELINE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A
INTERNATIONAL DOUBLE DOCTORAL DEGREE
(“COTUTELLE”)

BETWEEN THE
UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA (UNIGE)
AND
A FOREIGN INSTITUTION
ELIGIBLE TO ISSUE DOCTORATES

REGULATION AND PROCEDURE

International Relations and Partnerships Office (IRP)
2019
REGULATION

1. FOUNDATIONS
   1.1 The international double doctoral degree ("cotutelle" in French) is a measure for encouraging the mobility of doctoral students by developing scientific cooperation between two institutions.

   1.2 A double doctoral degree is distinct from a thesis co-supervision. The latter does not require the signing of an agreement and the thesis is supervised by a professor of UNIGE in collaboration with a professor at another university or within UNIGE. In this case, only the university of origin issues the PhD title and the acceptance of the co-supervision falls within the realm of the faculty, requiring no intervention by the International Relations and Partnerships Office (hereafter IRP).

   1.3 Regarding a "cotutelle", UNIGE does not implement joint degrees, but only double degrees. These take the form of two diplomas awarded to the doctoral student for the same thesis by UNIGE and the partner university, each with the mention of the collaboration and the international co-supervision between the two institutions. It is essential to ensure that the partner university shares this policy and does not require the issuance of a single joint degree.

   1.4 The Cooperation Agreement for the implementation of a double doctoral degree must comply with the regulations applicable to doctoral studies at UNIGE. Unless otherwise explicitly stated in the agreement, the doctoral student will have to follow and meet the legal requirements of each university, be it administrative steps, deadlines, fees, or manuscript submission. Failure to follow the regulations could lead to cancellation of the double doctoral degree.

   1.5 The thesis supervisor is responsible for the application of the terms of the Cooperation Agreement.

2. COOPERATION AGREEMENT
   2.1 A Cooperation Agreement may be signed with institutions authorized to issue a doctorate with which UNIGE has signed a collaboration agreement. For all other universities, the IRP will examine the requests case by case.

   2.2 Each university having its own agreement template, it is strongly recommended to use that of UNIGE. Only one document is needed.

3. DEADLINES
   3.1 The process of setting up a double doctoral degree can be slow and complicated. Negotiating the terms and conditions can last from 6 months to 1 year or more.

   3.2 The request for implementing a double doctoral degree must be sent to the IRP as soon as possible, during the first four semesters of the thesis regardless of where it began.

   3.3 At UNIGE, shall the duration of the thesis need to exceed the 10-semester period allowed by regulation, an authorization for extension must be requested from the competent authority according to the applicable study regulations. In the event of a favourable decision, the competent authority shall inform the IRP as soon as possible.

4. THESIS SUPERVISION
   4.1 The doctoral student seeking a double degree carries out his/her work under the supervision of a thesis director in each of the two institutions concerned. Both supervisors undertake to oversee the doctoral student’s work and their skills are exercised jointly.

   4.2 The thesis supervisor must be authorized to undertake this role according to the study regulation applicable at UNIGE.
5. **REGISTRATION**

5.1 The signing of a Cooperation Agreement implies that the doctoral student performs the administrative registration procedures in both partner institutions at the beginning of the thesis, or at the beginning of each academic year, according to the procedures specific to each institution. At UNIGE, the doctoral student registers only once at the beginning of his/her studies, at the Admissions Office.

5.2 The first year of the double doctoral degree corresponds to the first academic year for which the doctoral student is registered in both partner universities. The Cooperation Agreement only takes effect if this double registration is in order.

5.3 At UNIGE, the Cooperation Agreement will only be signed once the doctoral student is duly registered.

6. **FEES**

6.1 At UNIGE, the doctoral student pays university fees as stipulated in Article 77 of the University's Statute: CHF 65 per semester, and CHF 500 for the first and last semesters (or CHF 65 if he/she is an assistant at UNIGE during the semester).

7. **RESEARCH STAY IN EACH UNIVERSITY**

7.1 The doctoral student must spend an equal amount of time at both universities.

8. **DEFENCE AND DIPLOMA**

8.1 The thesis gives way to a single public defence which takes place in one of the partner institutions and is recognized by both. The place of the defence figures in the Cooperation Agreement.

8.2 The conditions defining the composition of the jury are defined in the Cooperation Agreement and must meet the requirements of both institutions. The UNIGE thesis supervisor must be a member of the jury and have the right to vote.

8.3 Each institution commits to issue the title of Doctor. Both institutions award a doctoral degree each for the same thesis. Each diploma bears the denomination of the title specific to the institution, indicates that the thesis was conducted within the frames of a double doctoral degree or a “cotutelle” and specifies the name of the partner institution.

9. **CHANGES AND AMENDMENTS**

9.1 In order to establish an amendment to the Cooperation Agreement, the Dean’s office or student secretariat must inform the IRP in case of change of:

   ✓ Supervisor
   ✓ Faculty or degree sought
   ✓ Thesis title
   ✓ Place of public defence

9.2 Should the double doctoral degree or the thesis be abandoned by the doctoral student, the thesis supervisor must notify the IRP as soon as possible. To terminate his/her studies at UNIGE, the doctoral student must request his/her deregistration at the Admissions Office.

10. **SWISSUNIVERSITIES SUBSIDY**

10.1 The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) provides financial support for double doctoral degree theses. The eligibility criteria, conditions and procedure are detailed [here](#). The subsidy request file, duly constituted, must be sent by the doctoral student to the IRP by 1st March of the year of application.
PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW

STEP 1: Verification of conditions
The doctoral student and thesis supervisor at UNIGE must inform the IRP of the co-supervision project and check with the partner university whether:

- it accepts the principle of a single public defence;
- thesis supervisors will have the right to be members of the jury with the right to vote;
- the partner university agrees to issue its own degree with the mention of the collaboration, and not a joint degree.

STEP 2: Thesis supervision
The doctoral student must be accepted to doctoral studies by a supervisor at each university and have their approval to co-supervise the thesis leading to a double doctoral degree.

STEP 3: Admission, registration and approval
The doctoral student must be admitted to a doctorate, towards a double degree, and to register at the University of Geneva: www.unige.ch/admissions/guide.

The competent authority of the faculty must approve the thesis subject in order to implement the double doctoral degree.

STEP 4: Drafting the Cooperation Agreement
The doctoral student must complete Cooperation Agreement for the implementation of a double degree available online (in French or in English). It is best to use the template provided by UNIGE, though it is possible to use the partner university’s model. The Cooperation Agreement must be read and approved by the thesis supervisor at UNIGE in consultation with the academic advisor, to ensure that it complies with the study regulation(s) and practices applicable in the Faculty.

STEP 5: Submitting the file
The doctoral student, in agreement with his/her thesis supervisors, must send the complete file to IRP by email including the:

a. completed Cooperation Agreement template (Word format);

b. proof of registration at UNIGE (semester certificate available on portail.unige.ch);

c. approval of the thesis subject with the purpose of a double doctoral degree (faculty letter);

d. coordinates of the person in charge of double doctoral degrees in the partner institution.

STEP 6: Negotiation and validation
The IRP negotiates the terms of the Cooperation Agreement with the partner university to make sure the text complies with the regulations applicable in both institutions.

STEP 7:
Once approved by both partners, the Cooperation Agreement may be signed, usually in 3 original copies. The collection of signatures will start in one of the partner universities.

At UNIGE, the signatories will be (preferably in this order): the doctoral student, the thesis supervisor, the Dean, the Rector. Once the first 3 signatures have been collected, the originals must be sent to the IRP. The Rector's signature will be sought last and requested by the IRP.

The IRP will arrange for the signatures of the partner university and will inform the doctoral student and his/her thesis supervisor at UNIGE once the process is finalized.

The doctoral student will receive an original copy of the agreement; the thesis supervisor and the academic advisor will receive a scanned copy. The IRP will keep one original copy.