UQAIB

Good Practice Guide
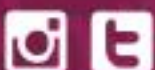
HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH

1. What is the purpose of this guide?

This guide is intended to inform institutions about the ways in which higher degrees by research (HDR) could be developed and supported in the Dubai context. The guide does not expand the scope of the UQAIB requirements. It elaborates on an issue already contained in the *UQAIB Quality Assurance Manual*. It is not prescriptive but provides exemplar options to suit different circumstances that can be adapted by each institution to meet their individual requirements. It is intended to promote high quality research degrees based on international best practice.

2. What is a higher degree by research?

Research refers to a range of activities that are carried out in a systematic, rigorous, critical and self-reflective fashion for the purpose of original discovery. It is a process that is applicable to all disciplinary fields, from the sciences to the arts.

The higher degrees by research (HDR) that are the focus of this guide are:

1. Masters by research: these include taught elements and a research project that is presented in a Masters' thesis.

2. The Doctorate: this level has been defined traditionally as intensive training through independent research, under supervision, aimed at creating new knowledge. More recently new forms of doctorates have required a refinement of this definition. As an example, the UK evaluation agency, QAA, states that candidates

    "must demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge in their subject, *field or profession,* through original research *or the original application of existing knowledge or understanding*." (italics added)[1]

The text in italics refers to new forms of doctorates such as professional and practice-based doctorates that allow those working, in particular in the professions, to pursue doctorates in their fields. In all forms of doctorates, however, the core component remains original research, even though doctoral students are often required or encouraged to take some taught elements.

---

[1] QAA 2015. *Characteristics Statement: Doctoral Degree*. September 2015. The Quality Assurance Agency.

The following guide is focused on the Masters by research and the doctorate, with specific attention to the research component of both types of degrees.

While it is acknowledged that Honours and other undergraduate courses may include research projects, they are not included in the scope of these guidelines. Undergraduate research typically focuses on developing research capabilities, rather than applying those capabilities to generate original contributions to knowledge.

3. External approval requirements

UQAIB expects to be provided with information on the following:
–   Confirmation that your institution has been given the authority to confer the HDR;
–   Copies of any evaluation report associated with the degree programme, either from quality assurance agencies or research funding organisations;
–   Where available (e.g. UK, NZ), copies of outcomes from any national research assessment exercises.

4. Internal quality assurance requirements

Because the core of higher degrees by research is the research results produced by the students, these degrees require a supportive research environment. These two aspects – the thesis and the general environment – determine that the quality assurance requirements of higher degrees by research are somewhat different from those that apply to first degrees. In the following sections, this Guide discusses the key elements of higher degrees by research. The quality of all these elements should be continuously monitored and assured.

The internal quality assurance mechanisms refer to institution-wide data collection (such as completion rates and career tracking), which can be analysed according to relevant categories (e.g., by gender, by faculties, by programme, etc.) as well as mechanisms for managing individual candidatures.

The quality assurance mechanisms involve feedback from postgraduate students and supervisors as well as from internally-initiated evaluations of academic and professional courses and research activities (research institutes, research groups, etc.).

Data analyses and the results of these evaluations are provided to the relevant university, faculty and departmental officers and bodies to allow them to monitor quality in a continuous manner.

As part of the internal quality assurance processes, institutions monitor the performance of postgraduate students' supervisors. Their department head, or other relevant staff member,

organises a yearly meeting with the supervisors to discuss their students' progression and any issues arising (e.g., an unusual number of students who are not progressing normally, an unusual number of students' complaints, etc.). If necessary, the department head will require a supervisor to seek training or will remove a supervisor from his/her role.

If more than two institutions are involved in the training and education of postgraduate students, a written agreement should describe the division of responsibilities, including with respect to the internal quality management of this degree.

The institution is able to demonstrate how it uses the results of these quality assurance processes to improve, including how the senior leadership monitors improvement at the levels of the faculties and departments.

5. Providing a suitable research environment

A stimulating research environment is critical to ensuring the quality of higher degree by research. Such an environment is characterised by the availability of:

- qualified supervisors;

- a collegial community of research-active academic staff who participate in regular discussion of research within and across disciplines;

- opportunities for international exposure and conference attendance for doctoral students;

- appropriate physical resources (e.g. infrastructure; information technology, including computer access, technical support, specialist software and the facility to securely store large amounts of data; access to research facilities including high quality research infrastructure and laboratory across a range of disciplines; access to adequate library resources; a desk and study space for each doctoral student).

For a comprehensive discussion of the characteristics of a good research environment, cf. Annex 1.

6. Managing partnerships

Partnerships with others – whether with other higher education institutions, international or industrial partners – enhance postgraduate provision. This is particularly true for branch campuses in Dubai, which can complement local provision with provision available through their home institution as well as with other academic and non-academic institutions.

Different types of cooperation arrangements, with academic and non-academic partners, are possible. All types of cooperation will be framed by a general policy and specific agreements

for each student to ensure good management of these relationships and to minimise risks:[2]

1) **The policy** will describe the quality assurance of all aspects of such partnerships as well as their governance and management, such as the policies and procedures that affect the students, the decision-making process, and the human and financial resources that are available to support such partnerships.

2) **The application of a specific, written agreement for each postgraduate student**:

   – Collaborative arrangements with *non-academic partners* (e.g., industry) are framed by a written agreement describing the responsibilities of each partner and any intellectual property right issues. The higher education institution has access to legal advice on such matters. The postgraduate student is supervised in the same manner as all other postgraduate students by an academic supervisor and, in addition, has a mentor in his/her workplace who monitors the progression of the student's work.

   – Cooperation with *other higher education institutions* leading to a single or to joint award are framed by a written agreement. This agreement specifies the responsibilities of all parties with respect to the coordination of the student's supervision and training and the type of award delivered. As an example, Annex 3 presents the national framework for "co-tutelles" that has been established in France.[3]

The following two sections provide more details on cooperation (1) between the HEP Home and HEP branch and (2) with non-academic partners.

Cooperation with the HEP Home

There is an expectation that students studying for higher degrees at the HEP branch in Dubai will receive a comparable experience to those who are based at the Home Campus. Institutions should ensure that all necessary arrangements are in place to facilitate a close working relationship between the HEP Branch and the HEP Home. Measures should be taken to ensure that students at the HEP Branch are able to participate as members of the wider

---

[2] Cf. Annex 2 for QAA's list of 19 indicators of sound practice in managing partnerships.

[3] International co-tutelles promote early-stage researcher mobility by allowing a doctoral candidate to be supervised by two supervisors located in two countries. A Memorandum of Understanding frames this agreement.

institutional research community and benefit from the range of research facilities available. Arrangements may include:

- Access to learning resources at the HEP Home including online library materials, virtual learning environments and IT facilities.

- Availability of staff and research students at the HEP Home to provide additional advice and guidance about chosen research topics. This may involve the appointment of a research supervisor from the HEP Home to be part of the supervisory team.

- Links with any postgraduate or research student organisations for discussion and mutual support.

- Online or video participation in research seminars and discussion groups held at the HEP Home.

- Opportunities for students to visit the HEP Home.

Partnerships with non-academic partners

Higher degree by research can be carried out in partnership between a university, a company (e.g. industry) and a postgraduate student. This requires an arrangement integrating the industrial supervisor in a supervision team, with the academic supervisor in the lead.

Work undertaken by the European University Association shows that a variety of collaborative models with non-academic partners are possible, depending on the specific research project, the respective profiles of the university and the company, and the regional context. Beyond these differences, and in order to ensure that collaborative higher degree by research meet the same exacting academic standards as more traditional degrees, some conditions must be met. The first condition is to build and maintain a trustful relationship. In fact, such arrangements are generally the result of a previous, long-term research collaboration between the university and a company.

Additional success factors include careful planning and integrating industry partners in the lifecycle of the higher degree by research. As applied to the doctorate this entails the following:

Planning the activities of the doctoral project well in advance and ensuring that they all make sense within the framework of the research project is a determining factor in the quality and functioning of the partnership. Involving all stakeholders in the different lifecycle stages of the scheme is also needed to ensure its success. Examples cited of this include when a company suggests a research topic, it is important to assess if it contains enough scientific challenges for proper doctoral research content; that safeguard mechanisms need to be agreed upon by partners regarding the

appropriate time and placement commitments, in order to ensure the doctoral programme stays on schedule.[4]

7. Resourcing and financial support of research

As a rule, the institution should put at the students' disposal research facilities as well as a work space and a desk, either in the library or in the student's department.

There should be unrestricted access to all relevant information resources including online publications and databases.

When scholarship funding is available, the institution provides information about the length of financial support, whether part-time students are supported, and the policies and procedures for the allocation of scholarships.

Policies and procedures for allocating teaching assistantships to doctoral candidates are accessible and criteria for selecting teaching assistants are fair, transparent and consistently applied.

8. Admission requirements

It is expected that admissions procedures will be clear, fair, and applied consistently on the basis of published criteria and procedures.

To ensure fairness, at least two academic members of staff are involved in reviewing the qualifications of the candidates, particularly for the doctoral level. Consideration should be given to the availability of supervision in a particular programme and to issues of discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity or students with disabilities.

9. Supervision

The supervisor is fundamental to the success of students undertaking research. A good relationship with a supervisor is one of the major conditions for the successful completion of a thesis.

Academic cultures vary a great deal across the world and this is reflected in how supervisors are chosen. At one end of the spectrum, some countries require supervisors to take an

---

[4] Borrell-Damian, L., Morais R., and Smith J. H. 2015. *Collaborative Doctoral Education in Europe: Research Partnerships and Employability for Researchers— Report on DOC-CAREERS II Project*. Brussels: European University Association, http://www.eua.be/activities-services/publications/eua-reports-studies-and-occasional-papers.aspx

examination before they are appointed to show that they have the skills required (e.g. Sweden). At the other end, in many parts of the world, professors are only required to have the right formal qualifications in order to become supervisors, or a certain number of years of research experience, and show that they are research-active.

Whatever the mode of designation, institutions are expected to have a supervision policy in place that is public and consistently applied.

The policy will specify the qualifications of academic staff who are allowed to supervise (e.g. active researchers, in the relevant field), how supervision is considered as part of the teaching workload, the maximum number of postgraduate students per supervisor and the supervisors' responsibilities (e.g., expectations regarding regular interactions with the postgraduate student; requirements about monitoring their progress; the support given to attain the identified learning outcomes).

In addition, regulations could include information about team supervision, and any mandatory or optional supervisor training (cf. next two sections); the formal performance appraisal of supervisors; and the complaints and appeals procedures available to supervisors.

10. Training and professional development of supervisors

Supervisors' training has emerged as an important trend in Europe where it has become an accepted part of university activities and a signal to postgraduate students that the institution takes their training as researchers seriously. For instance, in the UK,

> Higher education providers offer a variety of opportunities for professional development for supervisors of doctoral candidates: some have separate induction events for new and experienced supervisors; others favour joint programmes that enable supervisors with different backgrounds and experience to learn from one another. It is also common for supervisor development to occur at school or faculty level, or in Doctoral Training Partnerships and Centres, where there is a shared understanding of supervisory roles in a particular group of subject areas.[5]

Importantly, it is not sufficient to provide training; it is also essential to provide ongoing support so that supervisors do not revert back to a position where they are isolated and cannot discuss their responsibilities. This is highlighted in the following statement:

---

[5] QAA 2015. *Characteristics Statement: Doctoral Degree*. September 2015. The Quality Assurance Agency.

What we urgently need for our newly-trained supervisors is a highly attractive, helpful and comprehensive package of follow-up measures which support and accompany them in their future professional performance: measures for additional topics and modules, for refreshing the lesson learnt, for community building, for opportunities to jointly discuss and solve problematic cases, for jointly developing supervisory tools or journal contributions, for informal meetings like supervisory lunch talks, for international cooperation and cultural awareness, and thus for jointly creating and keeping the mission and vision of developing an outermost productive and supportive supervisory culture.[6]

11.   Ensuring continuity of supervision through co-supervision

If the initial supervisor leaves or is removed or if a student requests a change in supervisor for good reason, this must be examined and, if appropriate, another supervisor should be assigned. To ensure continuity in supervision, many universities ensure that teams are responsible for the supervision of postgraduate students' research, particularly at the doctoral level.

In addition, co-supervision reflects changes that can be attributed to the massification of higher education, which resulted in greater diversity in both the type of students and the type of doctoral programmes. By providing different approaches to supervision and a wider range of skills and experience, co-supervision can be seen as a response to these changes.

Through team supervision, postgraduate students benefit from a range of views on their research topics and take advantage of their relationship with multiple supervisors to enlarge their professional networks.

However, because confusion and tensions can increase with multiple supervision, it is important to think about ways to minimise these issues. As Denilco puts it: "joint supervision requires harmonised judgments to be made about advising, guiding, stimulating and inhibiting creative ventures, standing back to allow autonomy to develop depending on the researcher's nature, experience, time on task, and the project's important and more subtle variables."[7]

---

[6] Brentel, H. 2017. Success and Challenge of Doctoral Supervisor Training: Developing an Outermost Productive and Supportive Supervisory Culture, in *EUA-CDE Doctoral Education Bulletin*, Spring 2017. Brussels: European University Association.

[7] Team Supervision – Characteristics of good practice, by Pam Denicolo in EUA-CDE Doctoral Education Bulletin, Spring 2017. Brussels: European University Association.

12.   Instruction on research methods

Postgraduate students should develop a range of skills through their research and coursework in order to prepare them for both their academic and non-academic careers. Courses include academic courses in their subject and cognate fields and soft skills development.

The most important learning outcomes at the doctoral level includes the following:

– "search for, discover, access, retrieve, sift, interpret, analyse, evaluate, manage, conserve and communicate an ever-increasing volume of knowledge from a range of sources

– think critically about problems to produce innovative solutions and create new knowledge

– plan, manage and deliver projects, selecting and justifying appropriate methodological processes while recognising, evaluating and minimising the risks involved and impact on the environment

– exercise professional standards in research and research integrity, and engage in professional practice, including ethical, legal, and health and safety aspects, bringing enthusiasm, perseverance and integrity to bear on their work activities."[8]

To achieve these outcomes, it is necessary to provide postgraduate students with formal research training adapted to their discipline and research topic. This includes training in research methods, and discussion of research ethics and scientific integrity. Digital issues, such as open research and data management, are becoming increasingly important and included as part of the instruction on research methods.

13.   Student support services

Research students should have full access to the Institution's student support services, including advice and guidance on career opportunities. These support services should be staffed with professionals who understand the particular circumstances of postgraduate students.

Appropriate procedures are available to deal with circumstances that have an impact on the duration of studies. Doctoral agreements will be reviewed as required by the changing personal circumstances of the candidates such as parental leave, changing status from part-time to full-time or vice versa.

---

[8] QAA 2015. Characteristics Statement: Doctoral Degree. September 2015. The Quality Assurance Agency.

Postgraduate students, including at the doctoral level, are provided with career support. Career support helps doctoral students reflect on their professional plan, and find their first academic or non-academic position through such activities as learning how to write an academic and a non-academic CV, how to interview.

Doctoral candidates have access to an advisor to discuss their supervision in a safe environment. Any conflict and issues with the supervisor can be addressed through the advisor.

Appropriate personal support should be available from professionals who understand the stress and strains associated particularly with the doctoral level.

Opportunities for international or national mobility should be available particularly for doctoral students who should be funded to attend relevant international conferences. If appropriate, national and international opportunities to spend short research mobility in another institution, including at the Home HEP, is facilitated. These periods of mobility are framed by formal agreements that specify the rights and obligations of the two institutions and those of the doctoral candidate.

14. Monitoring student progress

To ensure appropriate progression, many universities require their doctoral candidate to sign a contractual agreement with their supervisor that includes clear milestones and is reviewed once a year. It can be revised if needed.

For instance, the University of Leiden[9] in the Netherlands requires the following:

- "A training and supervision plan must have been drawn up for all PhD candidates within three months of the start of their PhD programme.

- All PhD candidates have a second supervisor or a co-supervisor alongside the first supervisor. The training and supervision plan documents the division of responsibilities between the different supervisors.

- Each PhD candidate has an annual review or monitoring meeting each year with one or two independent members of staff. The quality of the supervision is an important aspect of this meeting.

- A go/no go decision is taken at the end of the first year of the PhD programme. This is documented in writing."

Of note in the Leiden example, is the annual meeting with "independent staff members" (i.e. not the supervisors) to discuss how supervision is working out. This is a good way of

---

[9] PhD Guidelines, available at: http://www.phd.leiden.edu/current/policies-procedures/phd-guidelines.html

addressing supervision problems. At Aalto University in Finland for instance, doctoral students have an assigned advisor for this purpose.

Progression and completion are carefully monitored as part of the internal quality assurance arrangement.[10]

15.   Examination processes, including assessment of theses

Aside from monitoring regularly the progression of research student, the thesis is the primary basis for their assessment.

There is strong consensus that the doctoral thesis should be based on original research of publishable quality. What concrete form this takes can vary substantially, including within a single university. The variation is based on disciplinary differences.

The two most frequent formats for doctoral theses are a monograph or a series of papers (published or not). If it is series of papers, the UK, for instance, requires that it is "an integrated whole and present a coherent argument" rather than a random assortment of papers.[11] Studio-based or performance-based research (in areas such as audio-visual, arts, IT, etc.) may also be presented as long as it is original work.

Some disciplines or some universities will require that the doctoral candidate has published a number of peer-reviewed papers in internationally recognised journals (often three articles). Reviewing requirements in biomedicine and health sciences in Europe, for instance, Olschewski notes

> "some universities require that at least one paper is published in a SCI-listed paper, sometimes with the additional requirement of impact factors above a certain level. Some universities require that the student is the first author of at least one published paper. Others are satisfied with unpublished manuscripts that are judged to be at international level.[12]"

Good practices in assessing both Masters and PhD theses include the following:

Regulations that are clear about the format of the thesis. Students are informed about acceptable formats for their thesis. Clear guidelines are available for

---

10 For an example, cf. The Australian Approach to Improving Ph.D. Completion Rates, Matthew Reisz for Time Higher Education, published in Inside Higher Ed, April 13, 2017

[11] Davidova, S. 2010. "Level and requirements for a PhD thesis" in *EUA-CDE New,* May 2010, Issue N°8. Brussels: European University Association.

[12] Olschewski, A. 2010. "Doctoral education and thesis in biomedicine and health sciences". *EUA-CDE News,* May 2010 Issue N°8. Brussels: European University Association.

each permissible format, including the deadline that students must respect for indicating the format of their thesis.

Assessment of the theses that is based on clear, fair and published criteria. These criteria are benchmarked nationally and internationally and are communicated to both doctoral candidates and supervisors. The institution periodically reviews the theses that have been accepted to ensure that they are of consistent quality across the disciplines.

The examination of the theses is based on procedures that are applied rigorously and consistently. If there is an oral defence, such regulation will specify whether the session is public or private, its approximate length, and the responsibility for arranging and communicating the time and place of the event.

Open access to the theses is promoted. Normally, all theses are available in open access, except if there are reasons requiring an embargo for a designated period of time (e.g. copyright issues, ethical sensitivities such as protection of human subjects).

Formal appeals and complaints mechanisms are available to all postgraduate students. The procedures are clear, fair safe, comprehensive and up-to-date, and are described in an easily accessible document. While respecting confidentiality and anonymity, the complaints and appeals that have been lodged are analysed periodically to ensure that clusters of problems are addressed.

Additional guidance for doctoral committees include the following:

The thesis is evaluated by an examining committee, which includes at least two external examiners. An external examiner is someone who is not affiliated with the institution granting the degree. A declaration of no conflict of interest with the candidate of his/her supervisors must be signed by each examiner. The committee members will write an individual report evaluating the thesis. There is a formal process for appointing the examiners and for evaluating their reports. The supervisors can attend the oral defence as observers.

Doctoral candidates are informed of possible examiners before they are appointed and have the right to raise concerns. The institution has the obligation to consider these concerns and decide whether they warrant changing a proposed nominee**.**

The examining committee collectively produces a statement to candidates that explains the outcome of their examination and the rationale for the

final decision. The institution specifies the basic requirements of this statement and has a procedure in place to deal with situations where examiners disagree.

16. Handbooks and guidance for supervisors and students

Information about regulations and processes applying to higher degree programmes are updated regularly and are easily accessible. Postgraduate students are provided with a complete set of information regarding their programme (e.g., academic requirements; rules and regulations; availability of funding; time commitment; supervision) and their specific rights and responsibilities (e.g. cost; intellectual property rights; appeals and complaints procedures).

An induction session is provided to new postgraduate students. The induction session has several aims: to introduce the students to their new environment, to create a sense of community and belonging, and to provide students with all the necessary information to start their studies in an optimal way (e.g. information about overall standards of graduation, scientific integrity, ethics, time commitment, attendance, engagement with supervisors, academic and non-academic course requirements and, international opportunities).[13]

Some institutions provide a "handbook" for Research Supervisors that cover the roles and responsibilities of supervision and give details of the processes in place to ensure that research students receive the support and direction that they expect. Such codes of practice ensure a degree of consistency in the oversight and management of individual research students and provide for the routine monitoring of student progress.[14]

---

[13] For instance, Edith Cowan University in Australia, recommends that the orientation "include(s) information about the expectations and responsibilities of supervisors and candidates, degree requirements, progress procedures, research integrity and ethics, grievance procedures, health and safety procedures and the availability of support services." Edith Cowan University Australia 2013. *Higher Degree Research Training Excellence: A Good Practice Framework*.

[14] A number of UK Universities have handbooks for supervisors. A good example can be found at the LSE: http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/TLC/Publication%20files/Handbooks/Handbook-for-PhD-supervisors-2014-16-FINAL.pdf

Annex 1: QAA's characteristics of a stimulating research environment[15]

– Demonstrable research achievement as recognised either through peer assessment as internationally excellent or above; or consistently recognised by the award of grants in open competition with, in both cases, outputs such as journal publications, books, and work produced in other media, including engineering, performing arts, sculpture, fine art and design, and other professional practice-based and clinical contexts.

– Sufficient numbers of research-active staff, including postdoctoral researchers and research students (either located at the provider or included in collaborative or networked arrangements).

– Knowledge exchange and impacts (including knowledge transfer partnerships), with an emphasis on the practical impact of research outcomes and demonstrable ability to attract external funding.

– Exposure to researchers working at the highest level in the student's chosen field and in cognate and related disciplines.

– Opportunities and encouragement to work and exchange ideas with people and organisations using research outcomes for their own purposes and with colleagues in the wider research environment.

– Access to academic and other colleagues able to give advice and support.

– Adequate learning and research tools including access to IT equipment, library and electronic publications.

– Opportunities for research students to develop peer support networks where issues or problems can be discussed informally (this could include access to social space provided for the purpose).

– Supervision that encourages the development and successful pursuit of a programme of research.

– Guidance on the ethical pursuit of research and the avoidance of research misconduct, including plagiarism and breaches of intellectual property rights.

– Support in developing research-related skills and access to a range of development opportunities that contribute to the student's ability to complete the programme successfully (including, where appropriate, understanding issues of funding and its commercial exploitation).

– Access to and support for a range of development opportunities that contribute to the

---

[15] Adapted from: QAA 2015. *UK Quality Code for higher Education; Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality; Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*. The Quality Assurance Agency.

research student's ability to develop personal and, where pertinent, employment-related skills.

– Availability of relevant advice on career development.

An environment supportive of research achievement may include:

– A collegial community of academic staff and postgraduates conducting excellent research in cognate areas.

– Supervisors with the necessary skills and knowledge to support research students in working towards the successful completion of their research degrees.

– Access to the facilities and equipment necessary to enable research students, in all modes of study, to complete their research degrees successfully.

– Access to welfare and support facilities that recognise the distinctive nature of research degree study.

– The opportunity for research students to raise complaints or appeal.

– Mechanisms for addressing research students' feedback both as individuals and collectively.

– Sufficient implementation and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that where a project is undertaken in collaboration with another organisation, the standards of both organisations are maintained.

Annex 2: Managing the doctorate with partners: 19 indicators of sound practice[16]

Indicator 1: A strategic approach to delivering learning opportunities with others is adopted. Appropriate levels of resources (including staff) are committed to the activities to ensure that the necessary oversight is sustained.

Indicator 2: Governance arrangements at appropriate levels are in place for all learning opportunities which are not directly provided by the degree-awarding body. Arrangements for learning to be delivered, or support to be provided, are developed, agreed and managed in accordance with the formally stated policies and procedures of the degree-awarding body.

Indicator 3: Policies and procedures ensure that there are adequate safeguards against financial impropriety or conflicts of interest that might compromise academic standards or the quality of learning opportunities. Consideration of the business case is conducted separately from approval of the academic proposal.

---

[16] QAA, Ibid

Indicator 4: Degree-awarding bodies that engage with other authorised awarding bodies to provide a programme of study leading to a joint academic award satisfy themselves that they have the legal capacity to do so.

Indicator 5: The risks of each arrangement to deliver learning opportunities with others are assessed at the outset and reviewed subsequently on a periodic basis. Appropriate and proportionate safeguards to manage the risks of the various arrangements are determined and put in place.

Indicator 6: Appropriate and proportionate due diligence procedures are determined for each proposed arrangement for delivering learning opportunities with an organisation other than the degree-awarding body. They are conducted periodically to check the capacity of the other organisation to continue to fulfil its designated role in the arrangement.

Indicator 7: There is a written and legally binding agreement, or other document, setting out the rights and obligations of the parties, which is regularly monitored and reviewed. It is signed by the authorised representatives of the degree-awarding body (or higher education provider without degree-awarding powers arranging provision by a third party) and by the delivery organisation, support provider or partner(s) before the relevant activity commences.

Indicator 8: Degree-awarding bodies take responsibility for ensuring that they retain proper control of the academic standards of awards where learning opportunities are delivered with others. No serial arrangements are undertaken without the express written permission of the degree-awarding body which retains oversight of what is being done in its name.

Indicator 9: Degree-awarding bodies retain responsibility for ensuring that students admitted to a programme who wish to complete it under their awarding authority can do so in the event that a delivery organisation or support provider or partner withdraws from an arrangement or that the degree-awarding body decides to terminate an arrangement.

Indicator 10: All higher education providers maintain records (by type and category) of all arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others that are subject to a formal agreement.

Indicator 11: Degree-awarding bodies are responsible for the academic standards of all credit and qualifications granted in their name. This responsibility is never delegated. Therefore, degree-awarding bodies ensure that the standards of any of their awards involving learning opportunities delivered by others are equivalent to the standards set for other awards that they confer at the same level. They are also consistent with UK national requirements.

Indicator 12: When making arrangements to deliver a programme with others, degree-awarding bodies fulfil the requirements of any professional, statutory and regulatory body

(PSRB) that has approved or recognised the programme or qualification, in relation to aspects of its delivery and any associated formal agreements. The status of the programme or qualification in respect of PSRB recognition is made clear to prospective students.

Indicator 13: Degree-awarding bodies approve module(s) and programmes delivered through an arrangement with another delivery organisation, support provider or partner through processes that are at least as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those for assuring quality and academic standards for programmes directly provided by the degree-awarding body.

Indicator 14: Degree-awarding bodies clarify which organisation is responsible for admitting and registering a student to modules or programmes delivered with others, and ensure that admissions are consistent with their own admissions policies.

Indicator 15: Degree-awarding bodies ensure that delivery organisations involved in the assessment of students understand and follow the assessment requirements approved by the degree-awarding body for the components or programmes being assessed in order to maintain its academic standards. In the case of joint, dual/double and multiple awards or for study abroad and student exchanges, degree-awarding bodies agree with their partners on the division of assessment responsibilities and the assessment regulations and requirements which apply.

Indicator 16: Degree-awarding bodies retain ultimate responsibility for the appointment, briefing and functions of external examiners. The external examining procedures for qualifications where learning opportunities are delivered with others are consistent with the degree awarding body's approved practices.

Indicator 17: Degree-awarding bodies ensure that modules and programmes offered through other delivery organisations, support providers or partners are monitored and reviewed through procedures that are consistent with, or comparable to, those used for modules or programmes provided directly by them.

Indicator 18: Degree-awarding bodies ensure that they have effective control over the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to learning opportunities delivered with others which lead to their awards. Information is produced for prospective and current students which is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. Delivery organisations or support providers are provided with all information necessary for the effective delivery of the learning or support.

Indicator 19: When degree-awarding bodies make arrangements for the delivery of learning opportunities with others, they ensure that they retain authority for awarding certificates and issuing detailed records of study in relation to student achievement. The certificate and/or record of academic achievement states the principal language of instruction

and/or assessment where this is not English. Subject to any overriding statutory or other legal provision in any relevant jurisdiction, the certificate and/or the record of achievement records the name and location of any other higher education provider involved in the delivery of the programme of study. Where information relating to the language of study or to the name and location of the delivery organisation or partner is recorded on the record of achievement only, the certificate refers to the existence of this formal record.

Annex 3: International co-tutelles – The French national framework [17]

French co-tutelles with international partners are regulated by a national framework. The following provides a snapshot of how these are organised.

Registration

- The student would approach the two potential supervisors and apply to both institutions.
- The two supervisors will sign a Memorandum of Understanding or base their agreement on a pre-existing, bilateral institutional agreement.
- The student registers in both institutions but pays registration fees in one institution
- The co-tutelle agreement will specify how the cost of housing and medical insurance will be covered.
- The doctoral candidate will alternate for a one-year period in each institution.

Conferring the doctorate

There are two options for conferring the doctorate:

- As a single award jointly conferred by the two institutions; the award certificate would indicate the title in the national language of the two institutions (e.g. Doctorat en littérature française; PhD in French Literature).
- As two doctoral awards delivered by each institution; each award includes a reference to the other institution.

In either case, the thesis is defended jointly in one of the two institutions. The examining committee includes representatives from both institutions (funding is available to cover travel and subsistence costs). The language for the oral defence and for the thesis must be acceptable to both institutions. An abstract in French is required.

---

[17] Adapted from: *Les co-tutelles internationales de thèse*, Campus France (no date)