
Guidelines on cotutelle degrees and other doctoral study overseas

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Guideline is to provide guidance on doctoral degrees where the student spends a substantial period overseas. It particularly provides guidance on arrangements for cotutelle doctoral degrees, which are where the student is enrolled at two (or more) Universities simultaneously and may receive two degrees for the same work.

2. Application of Guideline

This Guideline applies to Staff Members and Students.

Guideline Content

3. Context

- 3.1. Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington recognises the value of international student mobility as part of doctoral research.
- 3.2. There are various mechanisms for international mobility at doctoral level:
 - (a) A candidate registered at this University spends a period offshore to engage in fieldwork.
 - (b) A candidate registered at this University spends a period offshore engaging in research while embedded in an overseas research institution, such as a university, archive, library, research institute, or company.
 - (c) A candidate registered at a university overseas spends a period of time embedded at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington as a visiting researcher under the [Adjunct and Visiting Staff Policy](#).
 - (d) A candidate is registered simultaneously at both this University and a university overseas.
- 3.3. Of the above mechanisms, mechanisms (a) and (b) are accommodated within the existing [Doctoral Regulations](#) provided that the candidate meets the attendance requirements in Clause 4 of these Guidelines.

Mechanism (c) provides for an offshore candidate to visit this University. It provides no financial benefit to this University (unless the hosting School decides to charge bench fees) and the visiting researcher does not have access to the facilities and services available to our own students (such as Mauri Ora).

Mechanism (d) is a cotutelle arrangement, dealt with in Clause 5 of these Guidelines.
- 3.4. Staff are recommended to investigate whether any of mechanisms (a), (b) and (c) would be appropriate before considering a cotutelle arrangement.

4. Regulatory and Financial Framework

- 4.1. [Doctoral Regulations](#) 4.5(a) assume that doctoral candidates will attend the University, in person, on a regular basis.
- 4.2. Notwithstanding that assumption, candidates may study at a distance, provided permission is sought and approved ([Doctoral Regulations](#) 4.5(b),(c)).

- 4.3. Regardless of whether a candidate normally attends the University or has permission to study at a distance, candidates may undertake research at some other location, provided permission is sought and approved ([Doctoral Regulations](#) 4.5(d)).
- 4.4. Income for Doctoral candidates comes from three sources:
 - (a) Fees paid by the candidate.
 - (b) SAC funding paid by the Tertiary Education Commission, with SAC funding paid for each month that a candidate is enrolled up to 4.0 EFTS. Funding varies by discipline.
 - (c) PBRF Completion Funding paid by the Tertiary Education Commission, after a candidate has successfully lodged their doctoral thesis with the Library. Funding is allocated over a multi-year period, differs across disciplines, and is subject to other factors.
- 4.5. All doctoral theses attract PBRF Completion Funding, though this will be pro-rated if the University has received SAC funding for the candidate for less than 36 months.
- 4.6. All domestic candidates pay domestic fees and attract SAC funding.
- 4.7. International candidates studying for a PhD pay domestic fees provided they meet the conditions in Clause 4.8. As with domestic students, such students attract SAC funding up to 4.0 EFTS.

International candidates studying for a PhD who do not meet the conditions in Clause 4.8 do not attract SAC funding and may be required to pay international fees ([Fees Policy](#) 16(j)). International candidates studying for a professional doctorate pay international fees and do not attract SAC funding.
- 4.8. Government requirements mean that international candidates studying for a PhD in New Zealand on a study visa are limited in how much time they can spend outside New Zealand if they are to be classified as domestic students. In particular:
 - (a) International PhD candidates must be resident in New Zealand, apart from temporary absences as discussed in the following paragraph, during their study to be classified as domestic students. A student enrolled in a New Zealand university but remaining resident overseas does not have domestic student status¹.
 - (b) International PhD candidates who qualify for domestic student status retain domestic status and continue to attract SAC funding when temporarily overseas for the purposes of doctoral research. The time spent overseas must be no more than twelve months and that time must be for approved research purposes only. The University limits time outside New Zealand prior to full registration to three months. New Zealand citizens are not limited to twelve months of their time outside New Zealand, but are normally still limited to three months outside New Zealand during provisional registration.

5. Cotutelle arrangements

- 5.1. Any cotutelle arrangement must be based around a research topic that is substantially enhanced by being undertaken by the two specified institutions.
- 5.2. A cotutelle must normally arise out of an existing relationship between researchers at this University and the overseas partner university.
- 5.3. A cotutelle arrangement is primarily a means for promoting research, not a process for recruiting doctoral candidates. The initiative for such arrangements therefore is not taken by the candidate. A cotutelle cannot be demanded by a candidate nor be imposed on a candidate by a supervisor.
- 5.4. A formal cotutelle agreement must be drawn up between the two participating institutions in respect of each candidate that details the particular arrangements for that particular

¹ The TEC suspended this rule from mid 2020 until 1 March 2023, owing to the COVID border closure.

candidate, including details of academic supervision, pastoral support, enrolment time and expected time at each institution, fee arrangements, language of the thesis, ethics approval, intellectual property, monitoring of progress, grievance and appeals procedures, examination procedure, governance of the programme, responsibility in case of dispute, and procedures for the case of unsatisfactory progress of the research.

- 5.5. The arrangements for any cotutelle agreement, including approval of the agreement itself, must be completed before the end of the first year of the candidate's programme.
- 5.6. Candidates must be enrolled and pay the applicable tuition fees and levies at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington for the duration of the cotutelle degree programme.
- 5.7. All of the normal regulatory requirements for a PhD degree of Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington must be met in every respect.
- 5.8. Candidates must spend at least 12 months of the first 3 years of their research time at each institution, noting the restrictions on time spent overseas in Clause 4.8 of these Guidelines.
- 5.9. Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington will not be responsible for any costs that accrue to the student as a result of undertaking the cotutelle agreement.
- 5.10. There will normally be a single examination process that follows the regulations of Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington.
- 5.11. On a successful outcome to the examination process, Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington will award a PhD. The partner university may wish to award a separate degree. If two degrees are awarded each university will note on the testamur and the academic transcript that the degree is awarded under a joint agreement with the other university.
- 5.12. Individual cotutelle agreements must be approved by the Dean, Faculty of Graduate Research.

Related Documents and Information

6. Related Documents

[Education and Training Act 2020](#)
[Victoria University of Wellington Act 1961](#)

[Adjunct and Visiting Staff Policy](#)
[Doctoral Regulations](#)
[Doctoral Procedures](#)
[Fees Policy](#)

7. Document Management and Control

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