

CHAPTER 8

Collaborative Awards

8.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the quality assurance processes relating to visiting research students and National and transnational collaborative research programmes.

Collaborative programmes and awards 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. The following are the definitions used by Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin).

- A **Visiting Research Student** is normally registered for a higher degree at another HEI and visits TU Dublin for a defined period of time to carry out part of their research. Such students are supervised by one or more TU Dublin staff members for the duration of their visit but are not registered for an award from TU Dublin.
- A **Joint Research Programme** is a single integrated programme of research activities developed and offered jointly by different HEIs. Successful completion of a Joint Programme can lead to a single award, a joint award or multiple awards.
- A **Joint Research Award** is a single qualification awarded by two or more HEIs to those who successfully complete a Joint Programme.
- **Multiple Awards** are where two or more qualifications are awarded individually by each HEI to those who successfully complete a Joint Programme. Where two awards are made, this is referred to a “Double Award”.

Dual Research Awards are not offered on the successful completion of a Joint Research Programme. A dual award refers to two qualifications awarded individually to those successfully completing two separate curricula, but there may be sharing of resources or modules across the individual programmes. Each HEI is responsible for its own programme and award. TU Dublin only allows joint or multiple, including double, research awards when the criteria specified in section 8.3 below are satisfied.

Clear agreement must be reached at an early stage on whether a joint or multiple award is proposed. While a joint or multiple doctoral award arrangement for an individual student is permitted, proposals must clearly demonstrate the strategic and academic value of the collaboration.

8.2 Visiting Research Students

Students, registered for a research degree at another HEI, wishing to visit Technological University Dublin for a defined period of time under the supervision of one or more TU Dublin staff members, must satisfy all of the following conditions:

- Be currently registered for a research degree award at a recognised third level institution
- Have secured supervision by one or more experienced research student supervisors at Technological University Dublin.

Interested candidates will complete a PGR 1D [Application for Visiting Postgraduate Research Students] form which must be approved by the relevant Head of School.

Ethical clearance may be required for the research activities carried out by the candidate during their period of visit. The successful candidate will be registered under a code specifically for visiting research students, which will be excluded from all HEA counting processes. The successful candidate will obtain a student card for the agreed period.

8.3 A Joint Research Programme

Supervisors, researchers and research groups at TU Dublin are encouraged to establish links with researchers at other universities. Students involved in these joint research activities can be registered for a single award, a joint award or multiple awards. If registered for a single award from one university only, the student must follow the regulations of their home university, but may spend time in the partner university as a visiting research student.

8.4 Criteria to Establish Joint or Multiple Research Awards

Proposals for joint or multiple research awards must clearly demonstrate they meet all of the following criteria:

- TU Dublin will only consider proposals for joint or multiple doctoral awards where evidence is provided that the proposed partners are leading research universities. Such evidence can include, but is not limited to, track-record of research student completions, track-record of peer-reviewed publications, research strategy, position on university ranking system such as QS, THE or U-Multirank.
- The proposed partner institution has the legal right and capacity to make joint or multiple awards
- The proposed research programme must be in an area of disciplinary excellence or build on a strong established research link.
- A proposal for a joint or multiple doctoral award must have the full support of the relevant Academic Board.
- A proposal for a joint or multiple doctoral award must demonstrate that it meets at least 3 of the following criteria:
 - It offers long-term strategic benefits for TU Dublin through increased student recruitment, increased income, access to new resources and sources of funding, opportunities for academic exchange etc;
 - It will help to raise the global brand and reputation of TU Dublin;
 - It will deepen an existing research relationship and has the potential to involve more than one discipline;
 - It involves cohorts of students rather than a single individual.
- A proposal for a joint or multiple doctoral award must demonstrate that it is aligned to Ireland's National Framework for Doctoral Education, Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes and QQI's statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Research Degree Programmes.
- A proposal must identify the lead university, taking account of the research topic, supervision expertise and resources. Normally students will spend the majority of their time at the lead university;
- The requirements for the training of research students are met by the proposed programme of study.

8.5 Procedure for the Approval of Joint or Multiple Research Awards

If the proposal for a joint or multiple award relates to a bid for an externally-funded Doctoral Training Centre/Partnership, the Graduate Research School Office should be notified at the earliest possible opportunity in order to coordinate arrangements for approval of the proposal for the joint or multiple award. Externally-funded programmes can include, but are not limited to, Science Foundation Ireland's CRTs and European Joint Doctorate bids under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. Approval must be confirmed before the bid is submitted.

In all cases, the procedure for the approval of joint or multiple research awards is as follows:

Step 1:

The proposer should contact the Graduate Research School Office, for initial advice and guidance about the approval process and the regulatory framework and, where appropriate, also contact the International Office for advice on the standing of a prospective overseas partner;

Step 2:

The proposer should complete the PGR 1E form (Proposal for Joint and Multiple Research Awards). In addition all proposals should include statements of:

- commitment from the partner institution including:
 - *confirmation of its legal right and capacity to make joint or multiple awards;*
 - *information on its Quality Assurance Framework and any legal requirements*
- support from the relevant TU Dublin Academic Board.

Step 3:

The proposer should submit their case to the Graduate Research School Board for approval. The Graduate Research School Board will establish a panel to review the application and the panel may need to meet with partner representatives to discuss the proposed programme of study. The panel will include at least one nomination each from the Graduate Research School Board, the Office of the Vice President for Partnerships and the International Office.

Step 4:

Following approval from the Board, the Graduate Research School Office, liaising with the proposer and the partner institution, will coordinate the development of a memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the recruitment, registration, training and annual monitoring, and the examination of research students registered for the joint or multiple award. The Graduate Research School Board will approve all such agreements, and will report to Academic Council. The draft MOA and details on the financial arrangements will also need to be submitted to Office of the Vice President for Partnerships, for noting.

8.6 Agreements for Joint or Multiple Research Awards

For all joint or multiple research awards, students will be registered by both universities and will be entitled to normal student rights and privileges.

Each university will be responsible for reporting student numbers and related information to relevant national agencies. (In counting students, 1 student = 0.5 FTE at each university) This reporting should adhere to relevant national data protection information and should acknowledge the joint nature of provision.

For all joint or multiple research awards, there must be a written agreement between Technological University Dublin 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 multiple awards
- Identifies the lead university, taking account of the research topic, supervision expertise and resources. Normally students will spend the majority of their time at the lead university;
- Presents the fees payable to each party;
- Sets out the requirements for
 - Admission including minimum language requirements (section 1.3 above)
 - Academic supervision at both partner institutions. There will be a minimum of two supervisors for each student, at least one supervisor from each institution. (section 1.7 above).
 - Training of each registered research student (sections 2.4 and 2.5 above).
 - Annual monitoring and progression (section 2.6 and 3.5 above).
 - Transfer and confirmation processes (sections 3.8, 3.9 and 3.10 above).
 - Submission of the thesis, which will normally be in the English or Irish language. (sections 4.3 to 4.8 inclusive above).
 - Examination of the thesis including a *viva voce* exam and two examiners, one from either of the two universities and one external to both universities (section 4.9 above).
 - The award(s) that will be made on successful completion of the programme;
 - The wording and production of the award certificate(s) and transcript;
 - Intellectual property rights resulting from the research.
 - Dispute resolution and student grievances and appeal.

The details of the admission, annual monitoring, transfer, confirmation and final examination processes must be specified in each agreement. These may be the regulations of one university or a combination of the approach of both institutions.

Each student registered on a programme of study leading to a joint or multiple award must abide by the regulations of the University where they are based.