



Guidelines for cotutelle, double doctoral and doctoral programmes adhering to international networks

Procedure for a cotutelle Agreement

a. Introduction

Cotutelle represents one of the main tools for promoting and enhancing the international dimension of doctoral training. The cotutelle allows PhD students to write the thesis under the joint supervision of a lecturer from the Università Cattolica and a lecturer from a foreign university, carrying out research periods at the partner university. The institution of a cotutelle is provided for in Article 3 of the new "Regulations for PhD Programmes and PhD Schools at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore", to encourage the internationalisation of PhD programmes, in the manner indicated in these guidelines. Cotutelle agreements are activated to regulate both "outgoing" cotutelle, i.e. for students with administrative seat at Università Cattolica, and "incoming" cotutelle, i.e. for students with administrative seat in a foreign university.

b. Cotutelle prerequisites

In order to activate a cotutelle, it is necessary to: be enrolled in a PhD programme at one of the two universities involved; submit an application no later than the first semester of the second year of the PhD programme; plan a research period at the partner university; obtain the approval of the Doctoral Teaching Board.

Each cotutelle must take place:

- within the framework of a preliminary agreement (which may be intergovernmental, between two countries, or bilateral, between two universities);
- and an *ad personam* agreement binding the partner universities.

The duration of the cotutelle may in no case exceed the statutory duration of the doctoral programme.

c. Thesis discussion and doctoral degree

As a result of the agreements between the parties, the student will be enrolled in both partner universities. The doctoral thesis will be discussed at a single location, with the possibility of obtaining a double PhD degree, in accordance with the internal regulations of the universities involved.



d. “Outgoing” cotutelle (reserved for PhD students with an administrative seat at Università Cattolica)

PhD students wishing to carry out a cotutelle must send the "Request for cotutelle" to the Doctoral Programmes Office (dottorati.ricerca-mi@unicatt.it) using the form available on the website.

- The office informs the Coordinator and the Supervisor, who brings the matter to the attention of the Doctoral Teaching Board.
- The Doctoral Teaching Board approves the cotutelle.

Once approval has been obtained from the Doctoral Teaching Board, the formal process of the cotutelle is initiated through:

- the conclusion - or verification of the existence - of a *Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU) between the partner universities;
- the signing of an agreement or 'individual *agreement*' to regulate the cotutelle path of each PhD candidate.

Once the agreement has been finalised, the student should be enrolled at the partner university.

The discussion of the thesis must be scheduled within the duration of the doctoral cycle and will take place at Università Cattolica.

The dissertation is written in the language of one of the partner countries or in English and is completed by an *abstract* in the language of the partner country that has not been used for the thesis.

The final examination will be held in front of a Joint Commission composed of members from both partner institutions. After the discussion, following the favourable judgement of the Examination Committee, a double PhD title will be awarded by the two universities, if provided for by the agreements signed between the parties.

e. “Incoming” cotutelle (reserved for PhD students enrolled for the first time at a foreign university)

In order to set up a thesis cotutelle project at Università Cattolica, the foreign university must submit a formal request to the Doctoral Programmes Office of Università Cattolica, prior accordance with a professor belonging to the PhD programme concerned.

The Doctoral office will inform the coordinator of the PhD programme concerned about the request for cotutelle received. The Doctoral Teaching Board will be asked to approve the request.

The Administrative Offices will be responsible for concluding (or verifying the existence of) the MoU and signing the *Individual Agreement*.



After the agreement has been concluded, the *incoming* PhD student will be enrolled at Università Cattolica and will not be required to pay tuition fees.

The stay at Università Cattolica may vary in duration, on the basis of the months indicated in the individual agreement. Università Cattolica will certify the period of the cotutelle by means of a special "Certificate of cotutelle".

The award of the double degree by Università Cattolica can only take place following the positive outcome of the final examination and if the period of stay at the university is equal to or longer than 12 months.

Before the end of each academic year of the PhD programme, the Doctoral Teaching Board evaluates the activities of the PhD students in cotutelle for admission to the following year.

The discussion of the thesis follows the rules of the University that is the administrative seat of the cotutelle.

The dissertation is written in the language of one of the partner countries or in English and is completed by an *abstract* in the language of the partner country that has not been used for the thesis.

The final examination will be held in front of a Joint Committee, composed equally of members from both partner institutions.

Doctoral programme awarding a *double degree, multiple degree or joint degree*

A double, multiple or joint doctoral degree is the result of an international agreement between two or more universities, which intend to link existing or *new* doctoral programmes. In the case of a *double* or *multiple degree*, the PhD programmes concerned maintain their own identity and identify common paths for the award of the envisaged degrees. In the case of a *joint doctorate*, the partner universities shall establish a single international doctoral programme with the award of a joint degree.

a. *Double or multiple degree agreement*

The agreement to set up a doctoral programme with a double or multiple title is signed at least six months before the start of a doctoral cycle and its existence must be indicated - as far as Università Cattolica is concerned - in the Call for PhD competition.

b. *Joint degree agreement/Joint doctorate*

The agreement to set up *ex novo* an international doctoral programme with a joint title will follow - again as far as Università Cattolica is concerned - the timetable and procedures laid down in the "Regulations for Doctoral Programmes and Doctoral Schools at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore".



c. Procedures

In both cases the conclusion (or verification of the existence) of the MoU is necessary. Subsequently, with the support of the Doctoral School and the Agreements and Legal Affairs Management Office, the Doctoral Office prepares the agreement.

In the case of *double* or *multiple degrees*, students enrolled in the first year in a PhD programme at Università Cattolica (and those enrolled in the first year in a PhD programme at the partner university or universities) have the possibility of opting for the double doctoral degree pathway.

PhD students who choose this option carry out their research activities alternately at Università Cattolica and at the partner university as provided for in the agreement.

PhD students are supervised in their research work by a supervisor from Università Cattolica and a co-supervisor from the partner university.

The thesis discussion is unique and takes place in a single location with an Examination Commission composed according to the procedures indicated in the agreement. In the event of a positive outcome to the final examination, the candidate who has met all the requirements laid down by both universities will be awarded the doctoral degrees by the partner universities.

d. Conditions for the award of a doctoral degree by Università Cattolica

If Università Cattolica is the host university, the following conditions apply to the agreement:

- The Doctoral Teaching Board concerned will have to assess the candidate's suitability before he/she is enrolled at Università Cattolica.
- Doctoral students enrolled at foreign universities must spend at least 12 months at Università Cattolica for study and research purposes.

PhD programme adhering to international projects

Università Cattolica can participate in projects funded within the framework of international programmes, such as the *Marie Skłodowska - Curie Actions Doctoral Networks* (DN), in partnership with other Italian and foreign universities and non-academic institutions. These projects offer doctoral students (so-called *Early Stage Researchers*) study and research opportunities within multidisciplinary networks of universities and non-academic institutions, also with a view to broadening their career prospects.

Candidates who choose to participate in a DN programme must meet specific eligibility requirements, in addition to the standard requirements of Università Cattolica.



The selection of *Early Stage Researchers* is carried out by a committee formed by representatives of all the institutions participating in the DN. Following this selection, and subject to the positive opinion of an *ad hoc* departmental commission, the candidates will participate in the doctoral competition at Università Cattolica and will be enrolled as research fellows by direct call.

For the type of DN, that foresees the award of a double doctoral degree, a "*Joint Supervisory Agreement*" will be signed by the candidate and the two host universities. It will be drawn up for each candidate. The agreement sets out the conditions for carrying out the initial training activities and the candidate's obligations under the project, as well as the necessary conditions defined by the two universities for the award of the double degree.

In order to obtain the doctoral degree awarded by Università Cattolica, the doctoral student will be offered a period of research and training at the University of no less than 12 months, unless otherwise agreed by the parties.

If Università Cattolica is the administrative seat of the doctoral programme, the doctoral student is normally offered the opportunity to discuss the final examination at Università Cattolica, unless otherwise agreed by the parties.