

Research degrees that include periods of off-campus study

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The following document outlines the different types of circumstances where a research student may spend time away from the University of Southampton as part of their programme of study. Some circumstances require a formal partnership agreement to be made but, irrespective of type, all arrangements must be documented in writing and recorded appropriately so that the student, the supervisory team, and any third party (e.g. a partner institution) are clear about expectations and responsibilities.
- 1.2 The [Regulations for Research Degrees](#) and the [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#) apply to all research students in candidature for a University of Southampton award irrespective of their study location, unless explicitly stated in an approved partnership agreement (e.g. Memorandum of Agreement (MoA)).
- 1.3 The effort, time and costs involved in developing a research degree that includes periods of off-campus study should not be underestimated and may outweigh the financial or other benefits to the School. The development of a jointly delivered, split-site, joint or double research degree must be consistent with the University's Strategy and delivered with a partner institution which is similarly or more highly ranked than Southampton and who show high potential for existing research links to be strengthened and deepened. Such education partnerships require an institutional-level agreement and will not be approved if the School cannot demonstrate that a regular and continuing intake of students will be achieved.

2. Split-Site Research Degree

- 2.1 The split-site research degree is defined as a programme which leads to the University of Southampton award of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Students will be solely in candidature at the University of Southampton although they will

spend a significant period of time conducting research away from Southampton at an approved partner institution, normally overseas.

- 2.2 The split-site PhD is regarded as an education partnership and is subject to approval via the University’s [Education Partnerships Policy](#). Schools wishing to propose a split-site research degree should also consult [The Split-Site PhD: Principles and Procedures](#) document.
- 2.3 As a split-site research degree is a collaborative undertaking with another institution, an institutional-level MoA must be agreed and signed by Southampton and the partner institution before any arrangement commences. An Individual Doctoral Agreement (IDA) is also required for each student undertaking the programme.

Awarding body	University of Southampton (single certificate)
Required agreement	MoA (institutional level) IDA (for each student)
Approval process	Faculty Board → Due Diligence Panel → Education Partnerships Subcommittee → Education and Student Experience Committee
Links	Split-Site PhDs: Principles and Procedures Education Partnerships Policy

3. Joint Research Degree

- 3.1 The key goal to establishing a joint research degree is to develop and strengthen existing links with strategic partners around the world. Such arrangements are complex to establish and require a commitment from the School and Faculty to manage the partnership over the lifetime of the agreement. Such arrangements must be sustainable and this will be a factor in deciding on approval.
- 3.2 A joint research degree cannot be established with more than one partner and involves two awarding bodies, Southampton and the partner institution.
- 3.3 The partner institution must be legally entitled to confer an award jointly with another institution. A joint research degree agreement results in the award of a single certificate bearing the crests, or logotype, of both institutions. This indicates that the degree is jointly awarded by Southampton and the partner institution.

- 3.4 The joint research degree is regarded as an education partnership and is subject to approval via the University’s [Education Partnerships Policy](#). Schools wishing to propose a joint research degree should also consult the [Joint and Double Research Degree Framework](#).
- 3.5 As a joint research degree is a collaborative undertaking with another institution, an institutional-level MoA must be agreed and signed by Southampton and the partner institution before any arrangement commences. An IDA is also required for each student undertaking the programme.
- 3.6 A student studying for a joint research degree will have a supervisory team that includes at least one supervisor from each partner institution.
- 3.7 The joint PhD programme must be allocated its own programme code.
- 3.8 Periods of time to be spent at each partner institution will be clearly specified in the MoA and/or the IDA for each student.
- 3.9 The student will be required to spend a minimum of 12 months of their candidature at the University of Southampton.
- 3.10A joint PhD programme may be subject to the [Programme Approval and Review: Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes](#) policy.

Awarding body	University of Southampton and partner institution (joint certificate)
Required agreement	MoA (institutional level) IDA (for each student)
Approval process	Faculty Board → Due Diligence Panel → Collaboration Approval Panel → Education Partnerships Subcommittee → Education and Student Experience Committee
Links	Joint and Double Research Degree Framework Regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy awarded with a partner institution (Joint or Double PhD) Education Partnerships Policy

4. The Double Research Degree

- 4.1 The University of Southampton's default position is for a joint research degree (see section 3 of this guidance). However, it may consider entering into a double research degree with a partner institution where the partner institution meets the criteria set out in the [Joint and Double Research Degree Framework](#) and only where the partner does not have the legal capacity to enter into a joint research degree agreement.
- 4.2 A double research degree is the same as a joint research degree in that the programme is jointly designed, delivered and assessed by two institutions but instead leads to two separate award certificates, once issued by each partner institution. Students must therefore meet the requirements of both institutions to receive either award.
- 4.3 The key goal to establishing a double research degree is to develop and strengthen existing links with strategic partners around the world. Such arrangements are complex to establish and require a commitment from the School and Faculty to manage the partnership over the lifetime of the agreement. Such arrangements must be sustainable and this will be a factor in deciding on approval.
- 4.4 A double research degree cannot be established with more than one partner and involves two awarding bodies, Southampton and the partner institution.
- 4.5 The double research degree is regarded as an education partnership and is subject to approval via the University's [Education Partnerships Policy](#). Schools wishing to propose a double research degree should also consult the [Joint and Double Research Degree Framework](#).
- 4.6 As a double research degree is a collaborative undertaking with another institution, an institutional-level MoA must be agreed and signed by Southampton and the partner institution before any arrangement commences. An IDA is also required for each student undertaking the programme.
- 4.7 A student studying for a double research degree will have a supervisory team that includes at least one supervisor from each partner institution.
- 4.8 The double PhD programme must be allocated its own programme code.
- 4.9 Periods of time to be spent at each partner institution will be clearly specified in the MoA and/or the IDA for each student.

4.10 The student will be required to spend a minimum of 12 months of their candidature at the University of Southampton.

4.11 A double PhD programme may be subject to the [Programme Approval and Review: Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes](#) policy.

Awarding body	University of Southampton and partner institution (separate certificates)
Required agreement	MoA (institutional level) IDA (for each student)
Approval process	Faculty Board → Due Diligence Panel → Collaboration Approval Panel → Education Partnerships Subcommittee → Education and Student Experience Committee
Links	Joint and Double Research Degree Framework Regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy awarded with a partner institution (Joint or Double Research Degree) Education Partnerships Policy

5. The Dual Research Degree

5.1 In June 2015, Senate approved the principle that the University of Southampton could enter into a dual research degree with a partner institution, subject to the criteria set out below:

- the partner institution does not have the legal capacity to enter into a joint research degree arrangement;
- the partner institution's reputational standing in the general area of the proposed collaboration must be at least equal to that of the University of Southampton;
- the proposed arrangement must be in an area of disciplinary excellence at Southampton or build on a strong established research link;
- the arrangement must offer long term strategic benefits to the University. These include increased recruitment, income or funding; an enhanced global reputation or increased research links;

- arrangements must not be set up for individual research students. An arrangement might involve a succession of research students in the first instance as long as these are part of a larger cohort in both institutions.
- 5.2 A dual research degree involves each partner granting a separate award, one from each institution. Each degree-awarding body is responsible for its own award but the two components form a single package, and the overall arrangement is a joint enterprise which involves all partners in the creation and ongoing management of the programme. Each award has its own set of criteria and learning outcomes and the student does not therefore have to satisfy the requirements of all degree awarding bodies. The student may receive only one qualification if they do not meet the separate criteria or learning outcomes for the second qualification. The University of Southampton degree certificate will refer to the existence of the second certificate and will confirm that the period of study was concurrent. Ideally, the partner institution's degree certificate should do the same.
- 5.3 A dual research degree must be approved in accordance with the requirements of the [Education Partnerships Policy](#). The approval process for a dual research degree will mirror that which is in place for a joint research degree, with the outcome being the primary difference.
- 5.4 The partner institution may be within the UK, mainland Europe or they may be international. As the dual research degree is a collaborative undertaking with another institution, an institutional-level MoA must be agreed and signed by both parties.
- 5.5 An IDA is required for each student registered on the dual research degree programme.
- 5.6 A student studying for a dual research degree will have a supervisory team that includes at least one supervisor from each partner institution.
- 5.7 The dual PhD programme must be allocated its own programme code.
- 5.8 Periods of time to be spent at each partner institution will be clearly specified in the MoA and/or the IDA for each student.
- 5.9 The student will be required to spend a minimum of 12 months of their candidature at the University of Southampton.
- 5.10A dual PhD programme may be subject to the [Programme Approval and Review: Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes](#) policy.

Awarding body	University of Southampton and partner institution (separate certificates) which can be at differing levels of study.
Required agreement	MoA (institutional level) IDA (for each student)
Approval process	Faculty Board → Due Diligence Panel → Collaboration Approval Panel → Education Partnerships Subcommittee → Education and Student Experience Committee
Links	Education Partnerships Policy

6. The PhD by Distance Learning

- 6.1 Unlike a jointly delivered, split-site, joint or double research degree where a formal collaborative agreement is made between the University of Southampton and a partner institution, the PhD by Distance Learning does not involve an agreement with any institution, establishment or organisation where the student may happen to be employed. It is therefore solely the responsibility of the School that is delivering the programme to ensure that input to the student's research project is provided by the supervisory team as per with expectations of the [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#). Although there may be an additional local support contact who may be based at the student's workplace, they are **not** a member of the student's supervisory team.
- 6.2 The PhD by Distance Learning is **not** an online programme but it can provide flexibility for those students who wish to combine their studies alongside work and other commitments and who, for most of their candidature, need to study at another site, whether in the UK or another country. The PhD by Distance Learning is not intended to be an individual learning agreement designed to meet the needs of a single student but a programme with a distinct mode of delivery that a School may wish to deliver to a cohort of students.
- 6.3 A School wishing to propose a PhD by Distance Learning should consult the [PhD by Distance Learning Framework](#) which sets out the required documentation and the process that must be followed. Responsibility for the

approval of a PhD by Distance Learning rests with the Postgraduate Research Quality Monitoring and Enhancement (PGR QME) Subcommittee.

- 6.4 A PhD by Distance Learning may be subject to the [Programme Approval and Review: Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes](#) policy.

Awarding body	University of Southampton (single certificate)
Required agreement	IDA (for each student)
Approval process	Faculty Director of the Graduate School → School Programmes Committee → Postgraduate Research Quality Monitoring and Enhancement Subcommittee → Academic Quality and Standards Subcommittee (where variations to the Framework are proposed)
Links	PhD by Distance Learning Framework

7. Professional Doctorate

- 7.1 Professional doctorates combine taught compulsory and/or elective modules and individual and/or group projects with a programme of research training and supervision sometimes leading to the production of a thesis. Typically accredited by one or more professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs), such programmes require students to undertake periods of study and/or placements with an employer or external training provider which are formally assessed and successful completion of these elements is typically a criteria for award.

- 7.2 Although subject to the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#) and the [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#), professional doctorates will have additional programme-specific regulations which provide more detail about the programme structure and assessment requirements.

- 7.3 Professional doctorates are subject to the [Programme Approval and Review: Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes](#) policy.

Awarding body	University of Southampton (single certificate)
Required agreement	IDA (for each student)
Approval process	PGR QME Subcommittee → Academic Quality and Standards Subcommittee

Links	Programme Approval and Review: Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes University Policy on Placements
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8. Temporary periods of research study and fieldwork at another higher education institution, organisation/company or other location external to the University of Southampton

- 8.1 In order to pursue their research or to conduct fieldwork, a student may need to be temporarily located at another higher education institution, organisation/company or other location external to the University of Southampton. Such activities may be undertaken in the UK or overseas, with the length of time, and the number of separate periods away from Southampton, varying according to the nature of the student’s research project.
- 8.2 Such arrangements are made on an individual basis between the student, their supervisory team, and the external institution or organisation/company. Prior to any period of absence from Southampton, and in accordance with the University’s Health and Safety Policy, risk must be assessed and matters of intellectual property and insurance addressed. An IDA must also be completed and signed by the student, the supervisory team, the Faculty Director of the Graduate School at the University of Southampton, and the external institution/organisation.
- 8.3 Supervisory arrangements and progression monitoring and reviews whilst the student is away are expected to remain in place as set out in the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#) and the [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#). Typically, the student will be assigned a temporary contact or mentor at the external institution or organisation/company to help or advise on local practical matters relating to the student’s research project, but that individual will not be a formally appointed member of the student’s supervisory team.

Awarding body	University of Southampton (single certificate)
Required agreement	IDA (for each student)
Approval process	Faculty Director of the Graduate School
Links	Study Abroad Policy

	University Policy on Placements
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