

**UNIVERSITY COUNCIL  
ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE  
REQUEST FOR DECISION**

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**PRESENTED BY:** Kevin Flynn, Chair, Academic Programs Committee

**DATE OF MEETING:** March 23, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Changes to College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
Dual Degree Policy to include cotutelle agreements

**DECISION REQUESTED:**

*It is recommended:  
That Council approve changes to the College of Graduate  
and Postdoctoral Studies' Dual Degree Policy to include  
cotutelle agreements, effective May 1, 2017.*

**PURPOSE:**

University Council has authority to approve and revise policies concerning academic programs. The existing CGPS dual degree policy was approved by University Council in June 2011, and this proposal seeks to amend it.

**CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND:**

In June 2011, University Council approved a dual degree policy for the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS). Under that policy, CGPS was provided the authority to enter into dual degree agreements with other institutions for existing approved programs. CGPS wishes to amend the Council-approved dual degree policy to include cotutelle agreements.

**IMPLICATIONS:**

Since the approval of the dual degree policy, CGPS has found that program-to-program agreements may not be the best approach for fostering collaboration because of the significant time it takes to develop and deliver them.

Cotutelle agreements are a form of dual degree program; however, the programs are approved case by case at the student level rather than at the program level. Cotutelle agreements would be for Ph.D. students only, and then only in existing, approved U of S Ph.D. programs. All degree requirements for both institutions would need to be satisfied for an institution to award a degree. Students studying under a cotutelle agreement would complete one thesis under supervision from both institutions and would be issued parchments from both institutions upon completion.

**CONSULTATION:**

The Graduate Council, Graduate Programs Committee, and the Executive Committee of CGPS have all reviewed the change to the dual degree policy to include cotutelle agreements. Graduate Council voted in favour of this change at its February 7, 2017 meeting. The Academic Programs Committee reviewed the proposed changes at its March 1, 2017 meeting and voted in favour of recommending it to University Council.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Change to the Dual Degree Policy to include cotutelle agreements

# Memorandum

**To:** Dr. Kevin Flynn, Chair, Academic Programs Committee of University Council

**From:** Office of the Associate Dean, College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)

**Date:** February 22, 2017

**Re:** Proposal to update CGPS dual degree policy and introduce cotutelle programming

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In June 2011, University Council approved a proposal to allow the CGPS (formerly College of Graduate Studies and Research) to create dual degree programs within a defined policy. Since that time, the management of the CGPS policies were revitalized to be made available in a new web format, and to separate policy information from procedural information. As such, the CGPS dual degree policy is not presented in the same manner as it was approved. The College apologizes for the oversight, and seeks approval to revamp the dual degree policy. Note that in terms of dual degree programming, the college is not requesting any policy or procedural changes from what was originally approved, rather we are seeking approval on how the policy information is presented, and we are seeking approval of a supplementary policy on cotutelle programming.

Since the dual degree policy was approved in June 2011, the CGPS has found that program-to-program arrangements may not be the best approach for international collaboration. Dual degree programs take a significant amount of time to develop, they have a significant administrative cost, and they are not highly subscribed. As such, the Equity and International Committee (EIC) of the CGPS was tasked with investigating cotutelle programming. The EIC worked on developing the framework throughout 2016. The Graduate Council, Graduate Programs Committee, and the Executive Committee of CGPS were each given the opportunity to provide input in development, and administrative units on campus were consulted. The proposal has received unanimous approval by each of the three college faculty committees leading to the Graduate Council voting unanimously to recommend approval to APC at the Graduate Council meeting held on February 7, 2017.

Cotutelle programming is a form of dual degree program; however, the programs would be approved at the student level, rather than the program level. This would facilitate our opportunities for collaboration and internationalization as we would need to review information from the partner institution only as it was relevant to the individual student's program. Cotutelle programming would be available to PhD students only, and only in formally approved UofS PhD programs. Note that all of the degree requirements from each partner institution would need to be satisfied for that institution to award a degree. Should a student seek to 'opt out' of the cotutelle program, s/he would be able to continue studies at the institution of his/her choice. For cotutelle programming, the CGPS would seek to grant authority for the Associate Dean (or Dean) to provide final approval for individual student agreements. (With dual degree programming, the Provost holds this authority.)

The definition below for cotutelle programming has been determined through consultation with the Registrar's Office. Should APC support the implementation of cotutelle programming, we would request that APC approve including the definition in our institutional nomenclature.

A cotutelle program is a type of customized dual degree program available to students pursuing a Ph.D. The objective of the program is to develop cooperation between local and foreign research teams and facilitate the mobility of doctorands. As in the case of dual degree programs, the student pursues doctoral studies at two universities, writes one thesis under the supervision of a defense committee comprised of members from both universities, and is issued two parchments upon completion. A notation is also placed on the transcript indicating that the student completed his or her thesis under cotutelle dual degree arrangements. However, while the dual degree program is established at the program level, a cotutelle dual degree program is created at the student level, allowing for a more individualized and flexible program.

The CGPS is requesting that cotutelle programming be implemented effective May 1, 2017. Graduate faculty are excited about this potential opportunity, and the CGPS expects a few agreements to be signed immediately upon implementation, including one of our two Vanier Scholars.

If you have any questions, please contact [Kelly.clement@usask.ca](mailto:Kelly.clement@usask.ca) (306-966-2229).

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## COTUTELLE PROGRAMS

### **Background**

In 2009, the College of Graduate Studies and Research (now the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, CGPS) adopted a framework of principles for the development of dual degrees. It was upon this framework that the policy on dual degrees was drafted and approved, first by Graduate Council and subsequently by the Academic Programs Committee (APC) of University Council in 2011. When approving the policy on dual degree programs, APC delegated the authority to the CGPS to approve and manage dual degree programs with two provisos: 1) that such programs are for existing degrees that have already been approved through the normal program approval process, and, 2) that participating students attend the U of S and pay full tuition for a minimum of two years for a PhD program. Since then, a few agreements with university partners for the delivery of dual degree programs have been signed.

Inquiries from faculty and potential students about the availability of Cotutelle programs have been increasing over the last three to four years. This growing interest, as well as the University's strategy for internationalization, was brought to the attention of the Equity and International Committee (EIC), a standing committee of Graduate Council. At their meeting of December 2, 2015, the EIC members undertook to:

*Gather information on Cotutelle agreements and their use in other Canadian universities, assess demand and need for a similar program at the U of S, review current policy and administrative practices to determine barriers, if any, and, if the Members feel the concept is meritorious, prepare a briefing for consideration at Graduate Council.*

As a first step, the EIC members reviewed the approved categories of collaborative graduate programming offered by the U of S to students, including the following:

- The dual degree program is a program to program agreement, which is designed to facilitate the mobility of multiple students. The curriculum, required courses and electives, as well as faculty eligible to supervise are all predetermined and detailed in a partnership agreement. Such agreements take considerable time for consultation and development before they can be implemented. Students who complete dual degree programs successfully receive two degrees, one from each partner university.
- The joint-student program was developed for individual students who are pursuing a graduate degree from another university. These students attend the U of S for six months to two years, to do research under the supervision of a U of S faculty member. The work that they do here is used as partial fulfillment of their graduate degree from their home university, and, they receive a single degree from their home university.

The EIC members concluded that neither of these options provide the accessibility, opportunities and benefits of a Cotutelle program. As a result, in 2016 the EIC undertook to develop a definition and framework for Cotutelle programs at the U of S for consideration by graduate faculty.

### **Program Development & Consultation Process**

The Committee reviewed the characteristics of Cotutelle arrangements at several comparator universities. They found a lot of variation between the institutions, but some commonalities were:

- A Cotutelle program is a doctoral program where a student can study at two universities alternately, be co-supervised by a faculty member from each university, and receive a degree recognized by each university;
- Cotutelle arrangements follow a standardized structure that is stipulated in a Cotutelle agreement;
- The Graduate oversight body of the institution (Faculty, College or administrative unit) has administrative authority and final approval on Cotutelle arrangements facilitating a streamlined approval process;
- Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the receiving university, including English proficiency;
- Tuition is levied by each university according to its own policies for international students. Some charge an additional processing fee for Cotutelle applications, or, an off-site fee while the student is attending the partner university, and this can have a different name.
- There are minimum residency requirements;
- Host university scholarships are generally not available to Cotutelle students; they are typically supported by funding from their home university or country, or, research grant funding from the co-supervisors;

The EIC held several meetings to discuss what format such a program might take at the U of S and to review the information that was collected on Cotutelle programs at other U15 universities. At their meeting of April 19, 2016, the Committee adopted the following definition:

*A Cotutelle program offers doctoral students the opportunity to study at two universities, under a co-supervision arrangement, spending time alternatively at both universities. They write and defend one thesis, before a defence committee made up of members from both universities as well as an external examiners, and receive a degree recognized by both universities under a Cotutelle arrangement.*

The members developed a program framework, which was then shared with the broader academic community as a draft model for discussion. Faculty and other committees, including the CGPS Programs Committee submitted feedback over the course of five months, and this was subsequently incorporated into a revised framework in October 2016.

During the fall, consultations were held with the Registrar's office regarding the application and registration process and changes that may be required to the student information system. Agreement was also reached on the specific language required on the transcript and the parchment recognizing the nature of the Cotutelle program dual degree.

After a review of the framework and subsequent discussion, Registrar's Office and CGPS staff, as well as EIC members agreed that the Cotutelle program is a type, or subset, of the dual degree program. As such, this is best handled as an amendment to the existing policy for dual degrees. This would permit the inclusion of the specific details particular to the Cotutelle program and an alignment of that program within the dual degree policy framework.

If approved by Graduate Council, the Cotutelle program proposal will be forwarded to APC for consideration at its March 1, 2017 meeting, and subsequently to University Council, for final approval at its March 23, 2017 meeting. The target date for implementation is tentatively May 1, 2017.

## ***Rational***

A Cotutelle program provides doctoral students the opportunity to study at two universities, under a co-supervision arrangement, spending time alternatively at both universities. The student benefits from an enriched

academic experience, receiving guidance and support from two research and academic communities. By definition, working in two academic worlds, they adopt different scientific approaches and fresh perspectives, and they participate in a world-class research network. A Cotutelle program encourages students to engage in international scholarship and provides the opportunity to experience the rich academic and cultural life from two different universities.

Due to the nature of co-supervision, the two faculty supervisors are uniquely placed to develop research collaborations, which over time are likely to lead to cooperative projects and joint publications. Such publications serve to increase the University's global reputation, and contribute positively to institutional rankings.

Whereas dual degree programs are undertaken for the purpose of providing a structured program to many students, Cotutelle programs involve individualized agreements that provide for the receiving of a PhD student who completes a specified program of course work and research, produces and defends a thesis, and receives two degrees. Cotutelle programs have long been attractive to top doctoral students in Europe and this interest has spread to Canadian universities. An environmental scan of U15 institutions concluded that the majority have established Cotutelle programs with templated agreements modeled after those used by French universities. This provides a competitive advantage in attracting well qualified and research productive PhD students. Providing a Cotutelle program at the U of S would serve to attract more highly qualified European doctoral students seeking to expand their academic experience to include a period of study in North America.

The development of a dual degree program involves extensive consultation between two academic units, one from the U of S and one from the partner university, which requires considerable investment in faculty and staff resources and takes a substantial amount of time to develop and approve. By contrast, a Cotutelle program follows a highly prescribed template agreement, applicable to an individual student, which can be facilitated fairly quickly. It provides a more efficient and flexible option to a traditional dual degree program. Equally advantageous, it can be accessed by faculty and students in any PhD program without the need to have a pre-existing partnership with the academic unit in the partner university.

The CGPS Executive Committee reviewed the proposed policy revisions to include the Cotutelle program within the dual degree policy at its meeting on December 15, 2016, and passed a motion *"To approve the implementation of Cotutelle programming within the Dual Degree Policy"*.

The revised policy, with new language in red text, as approved by the CGPS Executive Committee, is attached for Graduate Council Members consideration and approval. Please note that the procedures and guidelines have been included for informational purposes only and are not being presented for approval.

## **POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR DUAL DEGREES**

### **4.9. DUAL DEGREE STUDENTS**

A dual degree occurs when a student pursues graduate studies at two universities, satisfying both institution's admission and degree requirements, and where applicable, with a project or thesis co-supervised by faculty at each institution. The student receives a degree from both universities, with a notation on the final transcript and/or parchment stating that the degree was obtained under a dual degree agreement.

Students attending the U of S in a dual degree program must follow the standard application procedures for graduate students, and must meet all of the admission requirements as set by the CGPS.

To receive both degrees, students in a dual degree program must complete the degree requirements at both institutions, **and whenever possible**, the two degrees will be awarded simultaneously at both institutions.

#### **Procedures and Guidelines 4.9**

Dual degree programs will exist through an agreement, or memorandum of understanding, with the partner institution that has been approved by the appropriate authorities;

Only existing approved programs can be offered as dual degree programs. New programs, or existing programs where the degree requirements are being changed, must first complete the appropriate academic approval process before being offered as a dual degree program.

Academic units will use the standard template for a dual degree agreement when developing the agreement, and, the template must contain all of the mandatory articles as identified in the associated procedures. These include, but are not limited to:

- Statement of admission requirements, or indication that CGPS standard admission requirements apply;
- Listing of course requirements;
- Listing of each institution's courses eligible for transfer credit by the partner institution;
- Statement indicating that the thesis must be written and defended in English;
- List of faculty at partner institution that meet the requirements for membership as an adjunct professor in CGPS and thus are eligible to supervise graduate students.
- If applicable, a statement indicating students will be jointly supervised by a faculty member from each institution, and, that the supervisory committee will have four members, two from each institution.

The transcript from the University of Saskatchewan will state "Dual XX Degree in XX Awarded in Partnership with XX University (Country).

The agreement with the partner institution will require that the partner institution include a similar notation on their transcript and/or parchment.

A decision to award, or not award, the degree to the student by the partner university will not be binding upon the U of S decision to award the degree. In the event of a veto by the partner university to award the degree, and if the student has completed all of the U of S degree requirements, a U of S degree may be awarded.

#### 4.9.1 COTUTELLE PROGRAMS

A Cotutelle program is a type of dual degree program, where a doctoral student is jointly supervised by two supervisors, each from a different university, and, the student alternates time between the two universities. The student writes one thesis, under the supervision of an advisory committee comprised of members from both universities, and, if successful, the student receives two degrees, each recognized by both universities. However, while the dual degree program is an agreement between two programs at two institutions, a Cotutelle program is an agreement tailored to an individual student studying at two institutions.

##### *Procedures and Guidelines 4.9.1*

Cotutelle programs will exist through an approved Cotutelle Agreement.

Academic units complete the Letter of Intent (LOI) and for a Cotutelle Agreement, using the template ([link to template](#)) and submit it to the Associate Dean, CGPS for approval.

After LOI approval, units should proceed to develop the Cotutelle Doctoral Agreement using the template ([link to template](#)) provided. When completed and signed by all parties, the agreement must be submitted to the Associate Dean, CGSP for approval. The Cotutelle Doctoral Agreement:

- Includes standard clauses such as intellectual property rights, dissolution of agreement, funding, etc.;
- Include research proposal which has been endorsed by both supervisors (Appendix 1);
- Demonstrate a clear path of study including required courses, examinations, timelines, etc. (Appendix 2)
- Please contact the CGPS Director of Internationalization for assistance with developing the Cotutelle Doctoral Agreement.

Inbound students, after CGPS approval of the Cotutelle program agreement:

- May apply to their program of choice using the standard online application process, and
- Must meet the academic and language proficiency admission requirements at the time of application, and
- Should have a minimum of one year in a Ph.D. program or a combined master's/doctoral program, prior to the intended start date at the U of S.

Outbound students, after CGPS approval of the Cotutelle program agreement:

- May apply to their program of choice using the required application process at the partner university;
- Must meet the academic and language proficiency admission requirements at the time of application, and
- Should have a minimum of one year in a Ph.D. program at the U of S, prior to the intended start date at the partner university.

Maximum agreement duration for an individual student is six years, and, extensions beyond six years must be requested in writing and approved by the CGPS.

The student initially registers with their home institution. After the signing of the Cotutelle agreement, the student will then need to maintain registration full-time in both institutions, until the completion of the doctorate degree.

The University of Saskatchewan will charge the student full tuition, at the international rate if appropriate, from the point of registration at the U of S, until their degree is completed. This period shall not be less than two years, regardless of where their research is being carried out. The partner university will levy tuition in accordance with their own policies.

Advising Committee shall consist of the Committee Chair, the two co-supervisors, a faculty member from each department, plus a cognate faculty member from one institution. Each university shall appoint their members by its own rules.

In approving the Cotutelle agreement the Associate Dean, CGPS is granting permission for the non-CGPS faculty to co-supervise as per Policy 10.1, and, to be a member of the advising committee.

Defence Committee shall consist of the advisory committee members plus an external examiner unrelated to either partner university. For the University of Saskatchewan, where co-supervisors also sit on the defence committee, they share one vote.

The appointment of the external examiner is subject to both institutions' policies.

Inbound students must successfully complete the qualifying examination in accordance with the U of S program's requirements and the unit's policies.

- If the student completes a qualifying exam at the home university, this can be taken as equivalent to the qualifying exam at the U of S, providing it meets the U of S program's requirement and standard for their qualifying examination.
- For those students with a completed master's degree, the oral defence for the award of the master's degree may be accepted in lieu of a qualifying examination in accordance with policy 12.6.1.
- If the home university does not have a qualifying examination, or, if what is required does not meet the requirements of the U of S program's qualifying examination, then the U of S examination must be taken. This would typically occur in the first term of the student's study period at the U of S.

Outbound U of S students would typically complete the U of S qualifying examination during their first year in program, prior to beginning the period of study at the partner university. The partner university may or may not have a qualifying examination as one of their degree requirements. U of S students who are participating in a Cotutelle program at a partner university are subjected to the degree requirements as set by the partner university for their degree.

Comprehensive exams must be successfully completed in accordance with the program's requirements and unit's policies. If a comprehensive exam is a requirement for both the U of S and the partner university degree, a single exam may be recognized by both universities should the two parties choose to collaborate on the preparation and testing of the student.

Students must complete the course requirements as described in the degree requirements for each degree. No more than 50% of the total coursework for the U of S degree can be fulfilled through transfer credit. Any coursework considered for transfer credit must be equivalent to 800-level courses at the U of S. The partner university has jurisdiction over what courses they would accept for transfer credit towards

their degree in accordance with their policies. All course requirements to be fulfilled through transfer credit will be stipulated in the Cotutelle agreement.

The thesis must be written in English and defended in English. The thesis shall be submitted to the home university with a copy to the partner university simultaneously. For the University of Saskatchewan, Recommendation for Defence will constitute Permission to Submit the Thesis for Defence under CGPS policy 13.1.

A single oral defence, at the home institution, recognized by both participating universities will be scheduled. Examiners are expected to participate in the oral defence, and, remote conferencing may be used to mitigate these costs. Additional costs can arise from expenses related to the thesis defense, and, these costs will be shared among the participating institutions as stipulated in the Cotutelle agreement.

The submission, description and reproduction of the thesis must be conducted according to the regulations in effect at each institution.

In the event of premature dissolution of the Cotutelle agreement, the student may remain enrolled in one of the partner institutions. To dissolve the agreement of Cotutelle, the student must petition for dissolution of the Cotutelle in writing to both institutions by submitting a letter of request to revoke the agreement which must:

- Indicate where he/she chooses to pursue his/her doctoral studies;
- Confirm the list of inventions and creations to date in the research, and the holder(s) of intellectual property rights

This letter should be sent to the head of programs, supervisors and authorities governing the Cotutelle agreement in each partner institutions as well as the Associate Dean CGPS. The Cotutelle will only be dissolved following an agreement stipulating the respective contributions of stakeholders (supervisors and student) to intellectual property created during the project.

In the event where a student would choose to not continue his/her studies at the University of Saskatchewan, all scholarships and funding received by the student from the University of Saskatchewan will stop at the date of the dissolution of the Cotutelle agreement.

### 8.3.8. REGISTRATION OF DUAL DEGREE STUDENTS

Students attending the U of S in a dual degree program must be registered and attending the U of S for a minimum of three terms for master's students (one year), or, for a minimum of six terms (two years) for doctoral students.