



Policy on Research Supervision and Awards in Collaboration with Other Institutions

v2_Feb 2014

Contents

2. DCU Policy for Joint Research Supervision and Awards	2
2.1 Aspects of the Framework	2
a. Informal Collaboration (research award by one institution)	2
b. Formal Collaboration (research award by one institution).....	2
c. Joint and Double Awards (more than one institution awards research degree)	2
2.2 Guidance / Criteria	3
a. Informal Collaboration.....	3
b. Formalised Collaboration.....	4
c. Joint and Double Awards	4

2. DCU Policy for Joint Research Supervision and Awards

Agreements with other institutions in relation to research supervision are mooted in a variety of ways ranging from those reflecting personal collaboration, to those developed in the context a funding proposal or of an existing or new strategic relationship. Agreements can be initiated through a formal approach to or from another institution, or at School/Unit, Faculty or individual DCU supervisor level.

This policy is built upon a framework of categories of collaboration and guides colleagues to the most appropriate type of collaboration to reflect their particular circumstance and the type of agreement or approval required, when appropriate.

2.1 Aspects of the Framework

a. Informal Collaboration (research award by one institution)

These refer to collaborations where researchers engage in informal discussion with students, provide feedback, or comment on aspects of a student's work, but the interactions are not so extensive as to justify appointment to the role of supervisor. The informal basis upon which the interaction is taking place shall be made clear to external colleagues (in respect of a DCU research student) so that misplaced expectation regarding publications, IP ownership, registration or fees shall be avoided.

b. Formal Collaboration (research award by one institution)

These refer to collaborations in which supervisors from more than one institution are formally appointed. Co-supervision arrangements with a partner university and student are entered into in cases where the student spends more than 1 month in an academic year in the partner university (in the case of a DCU student), or in DCU (in the case of an external student). These shall be drawn up at the time of registration, or at the beginning of the collaboration. The programme agreement shall cover the subject of the research, a schedule of time at each institution, supervisory arrangements, material costs, administration of funding, fees, and insurance. This agreement shall be signed by the relevant Executive Dean of Faculty in DCU or nominee, or by the Dean of Graduate Studies if part of a funded collaborative programme. IP ownership shall be covered by a separate agreement, approved and signed by the Vice President for Research and Innovation or nominee (Director of RIS, or Director of Innovation).

c. Joint and Double¹ Awards (more than one institution awards research degree)

These refer to collaborations where a student is jointly supervised in more than one institution, spends time at each of the institutions and is awarded either a joint research award (in which one parchment is issued jointly by the partner institutions or two

¹ also referred to as Dual awards

parchments are issued with a clear reference in both that the respective degree is awarded alternate not cumulated) or a double award² (where each institution makes an award in parallel).

It is acknowledged that there is a distinction in nature between a joint award and a double award. In cases where an inter-institutional agreement is entered into, the University's preference is for a joint research award but DCU shall consider a double award in exceptional cases. Legal frameworks and differing quality assurance regimes may be impossible difficult to reconcile, there may be no degree equivalence at the two partner institutions, or legal constraints on the issuing of a joint award may exist. It is of note however that the double counting of credit for work may preclude double awards under some national QA systems.

Joint awards must be underpinned by formal agreements. The programme agreement which, in addition to those issues listed in section 2.1 b (the subject of the research, a schedule of time at each institution, supervisory and review arrangements, material costs, administration of funding, fees and insurance) regulates enrolment and the evaluation of the candidate's doctoral degree dissertation, shall be signed by the DCU Vice President of Academic Affairs (Registrar), following internal approval processes. IP agreements between the institutions shall be approved and signed by the Vice President for Research and Innovation or nominee (Director of RIS, or Director of Innovation).

Approval for a joint award must be given prior to initial registration. Proposals for retrospective approval for a continuing student shall not be considered.

2.2 Guidance / Criteria

a Informal Collaboration

DCU is supportive of collaboration between our researchers and those of other institutions. In the spirit of collegiality this may include informal discussions with research students of collaborators, and provision of expert opinion on an aspect of their work. Equally DCU recognises that DCU students benefit from informal discussions with colleagues in other institutions and feedback on work presented at conferences etc.

If such interaction is not extensive (ranging from minutes to perhaps 10 hours of work in any year) then no formal arrangement is necessary. It is not expected that the engagement be recorded as a workload for the DCU academic (in the case of an external student). It is a matter for the DCU supervisor and research student to consider, in line with ethical research practice, whether the input is reflected in authorship of specific papers.

² This award could take the form of one certificate stating the two titles or two separate certificates each giving one degree

Should the interaction grow beyond approximately 10 hrs of work in any year, a DCU supervisor may consider that an invitation to become an external supervisor be extended to or sought of a collaborator. This is subject to the normal Faculty based process for changes in supervision, and may require an underpinning agreement, as described in section 2. 1 b Formalised Collaboration.

b Formalised Collaboration

It is appropriate to nominate an external supervisor where a DCU supervisor and student have extensive engagement on the project with a researcher in another institution, resulting in a significant workload for that researcher (e.g. more than 10hrs in a given academic year). In addition, in contexts where the DCU student spends lengths of time (> 1 month in an academic year) at the other institution a formal co-supervision arrangement with the partner university and student is required. If a shared award is intended, then the criteria in section 2.2c *Joint and Double Awards* of this policy should be considered.

DCU academic staff are encouraged to accept invitations to act as external supervisors where they have extensive engagement on a project with a research student in another institution. However, it is recognised that this represents a non-trivial workload for the academic, and should only be undertaken with the support of their Head of School/Unit, cognisant of the overall workload of the individual, and a desire to ensure that DCU students are not disadvantaged as a result of the arrangement. In addition, in contexts where an external student spends lengths of time (> 1 month in an academic year) in DCU a formal co-supervision arrangement with the partner University and student (which should be drawn up at the time of registration, or at the beginning of the collaboration) is required. Visiting students should be registered in DCU, under the agreements, as a research student visitor.

c Joint and Double Awards

DCU recognises legitimate drivers for engagement with other institutions in the joint awarding of research degrees. However, it also recognises that joint degrees tend to involve a very heavy administrative overhead, and have associated risks for both students and the University.

DCU research awards are of the highest standard and, in the vast majority of cases, it is preferable that DCU registered students graduate with a DCU-only award.

Joint awards shall only be considered in the following contexts:

- where there is an existing formalised strategic partnership in place in which awarding of joint degrees forms part of the MOU underpinning the partnership. This does not include situations where a simple letter of intent or equivalent is in place with an institution.

- where DCU would be favourably positioned for prestigious funding that is contingent on the issuing of joint awards with a particular partner institution.
- where the instigation of a joint award is a significant step in the process of developing a formalised partnership with a particular institution / country, in the context of an approved internationalisation strategy.

A joint award, even in these contexts, shall not necessarily be the preferred or guaranteed option. Joint degrees represent the ultimate form of research programme integration and institutional partnership, and are expected by funding agencies to show “efficiency and integration of practice, rather than just being an amalgam of different practices and procedures across partner sites”³. Given this, the expense and time investment, the benefits of making a joint award have to extend beyond the individual student and/or their supervisor. DCU shall not support a joint award proposal aimed simply at reflecting an individual student’s experience. It is also not an appropriate mechanism to incentivise or reward collaborations between individuals or research groups.

As for all joint awards, requests for a joint research award with a given institution requires that the due diligence process in respect of that institution be carried out and approved. Academic, financial and legal issues are particularly relevant in this context.

Joint awards shall only be considered by DCU in cases where: i) the research student registers for at least one year in DCU and ii) the candidate spends a minimum of 6 months at any other institution party to the award.

Policy on Research Supervision and Awards in Collaboration with Other Institutions_v2		
Graduate Studies Office		
Approved by:	Date	
V2: Education Committee	05/02/2014	
V1: DCU Executive Academic Council	26/02/2013 05/6/2013	

³ ERASMUS MUNDUS Quality Assessment Project, Quality Handbook: Summary, EU Commission Dec 2010