

# Joint Supervision Thesis Guidebook

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## 1. Foreword :

### 1.1 Introduction :

The international joint supervision Thesis is a scheme that encourages the mobility of doctoral students and helps to develop scientific cooperation between French and foreign research teams.

The international Joint supervision Thesis allows the doctoral student to obtain the double degree of Thesis/PhD in France and in the co-supervision partner country for the same thesis work.

The general principles governing the international Joint supervision Thesis are the following.

- 1) The doctoral student **is registered simultaneously** and for the whole duration of his/her thesis **in two institutions**, one in France, the other abroad;
- 2) The doctoral student **conducts his/her work under the responsibility of a Thesis Director in each Partner Institution**, who both agree to assume his/her full supervisory responsibilities in collaboration with the other Thesis Director(s);
- 3) The doctoral student must work on his/her doctorate by being present in both institutions on **alternating periods**;
- 4) **The Thesis defense of a Joint supervision Thesis student is made once and leads to the award of the double title of doctor** in France and in the partner country (each country simultaneously awards its degree).

### 1.2 Legal framework

French modalities of international Joint supervision Thesis are defined by Title III of the Decree of 25 May 2016 establishing the national framework of training and modalities for awarding the national doctoral diploma (sections 20-231<sup>1</sup>).

A joint supervision agreement must be established to define the specific terms of joint supervision for each doctoral student. The joint supervision agreement is the reference document for setting-up administrative and pedagogical procedures for the doctoral student study's course. It therefore reflects all the terms and conditions on which both institutions have agreed in order to be able to award respectively a co-supervised doctoral degree. Any changes in the modalities of the joint supervision Thesis must be the subject of an agreement's amendment.

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<sup>1</sup>Full text : <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000032587086/2021-02-01/>

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With some foreign institutions, the setting-up of a **framework agreement** is a prerequisite to establishing an individual joint supervision Thesis agreement ("application agreement").

If such a framework agreement procedure is required by the foreign institution, the request must be made in parallel at UPEC International Relations Departement.

### 1.3 Conditions for setting-up a Joint supervision Thesis:

#### 1.3.1. Deadlines for setting-up:

A Joint supervision Thesis leads to the delivery of two doctoral degrees for the same thesis work. Therefore, the framework in place must ensure that each institution's own rules for awarding the doctorate are followed, including regulatory frameworks. This can lead to a restrictive framework for the doctoral student because he or she will have to respect and complete the administrative and pedagogical procedures of both institutions. Consequently, the setting-up of a joint supervision Thesis is a long and requiring process (several months, and often a whole academic year, are necessary to negotiate and sign the joint supervision agreement). **Before applying for a Joint supervision Thesis setting-up, Thesis Directors are invited to examine all the possibilities of international mobility (international co-direction, Erasmus +...) and to make sure that Joint supervision Thesis is the most appropriate possibility for what they plan.**

The Joint supervision agreement must be signed at the latest before the end of the first year of Thesis registration. For this reason, it is not possible to request a Joint supervision Thesis registration for a student in his second year of thesis in a foreign country. **It is not possible to have a separate registration between UPEC and the foreign Partner Institution. Ideally, the request for joint supervision should be made for simultaneous registration in the first year of the doctoral studies in both institutions.**

When the organization of doctoral studies in the partner country necessarily leads to a timing difference between the two institutions ( for example: doctoral programmes including master's studies), this particularity must be specified in the Joint supervision application.

#### 1.3.2 Training, scientific and international cooperation challenges :

Joint supervision application is only complete with the examination of the scientific relevance of the international collaboration that requires a Joint supervision Thesis. For this reason, the Joint supervised Thesis must be initiated by Thesis Directors and not by the doctoral.

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Particularly, Thesis Directors should define the interest of the Joint supervision Thesis on two aspects: the added value of the Joint supervision Thesis for the training of the doctoral student as well as the added value for the reputation of the research team and the international institutional cooperation.

Annex 1 to this document gives additional details on this two points.

## 2. Examination of the international Joint supervision agreement :

### 2.1 General information

The examination of international Joint supervision agreements is achieved by the Scientific Structuring and Strategy unit ( P3S) of the Research and Development Directorate (DRV).

The Joint supervision procedure is divided into two parts: an application for Joint supervision Thesis, and - if this has been obtained - the Joint supervision agreement negotiation itself. However, there is a difference according to the home institution of the doctoral student:

- **If the doctoral student is already admitted to a doctoral programme at a foreign institution when he or she applies at UPEC**, then UPEC is the "pilot" institution for the Joint supervision process. This means that the doctoral student applies for registration at UPEC as part of his Joint supervision application. If the Joint supervision project is rejected, the registration at UPEC will also be rejected.

- **If the doctoral student is already admitted to a doctoral programme at UPEC when he or she wishes to apply to a foreign institution**, then this institution is the "pilot" of the Joint supervision process. If the Joint supervision project is rejected, the doctoral student will still be registered as a doctoral student at UPEC. The Thesis Supervisors are invited to contact the foreign institution to find out about their timetable and specific procedure for applying for Joint supervision.

The application file attached to this guide contains all information and documents which must be completed to apply for a Joint supervision Thesis.

### 2.2. Procedure and timetable for Joint supervision Thesis applications:

The application file for Joint supervision aims to assess the interest of establishing such partnership between UPEC and the foreign partner institution. In addition, its goal is to collect all necessary information to prepare the agreement and to check that the Joint supervision project is feasible, not only scientifically but also on the logistical and financial point of views.

The application file must respect the following points:

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- The agreement must provide an added value compared to non-formalized international cooperation or to another arrangement (see FAQ);
- The planned conditions must be compatible with the UPEC doctoral charter, the national regulatory framework (in particular Title III of the Decree of 25 May 2016) and the internal rules of Doctoral Schools.
- Only proven incompatibilities with the official procedures of the foreign institution may lead to exceptions, as part of a balanced negotiation during the setting-up of the agreement;
- The Doctoral School favorable (and motivated) opinion for enrolment in a doctorate at UPEC must be obtained before any steps are taken to establish an international Joint supervision agreement;
- The international Joint supervision Thesis agreement (as a signed convention) is established as early as possible in the doctoral student course, in principle even before registration in doctoral studies or at the latest before the end of the first year of doctoral studies.
- The Joint supervision application file must be accepted by the Validation Committee before doctoral registration.

The application for international Joint supervision Thesis must be made in all cases, including in the case where the Partner Institution has its own agreement template or wishes to use its own text.

Important : For some countries, the Opinion of UPEC High Defense and Security Officer will be requested.

We receive co-tutoring applications as they come in. However, an application received early in the year will be processed more quickly and with the assurance of being completed.

The attached application form and any supporting documents must be sent by e-mail to [doctorat@u-pec.fr](mailto:doctorat@u-pec.fr) (with the Name of the candidate in subject).

Important: Application for Joint supervision Thesis will not be accepted without a complete application file, including the opinion of the Doctoral School. Joint supervision Thesis applications will not be accepted outside this process. Any Joint supervision project declared after the administrative registration of the doctoral student will systematically be rejected.

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All complete applications will be presented for examination by the Joint supervision Validation Committee<sup>2</sup>

### 2.3 Examination of Joint supervision projects by the Validation Committee:

The Validation Committee will examine all applications received by e-mail and will check if all conditions are completed.

Validation Committee are organized throughout the academic year.

When an application file is rejected by the Validation Committee, details about the evaluation decision will be sent to the Doctoral School and concerned Thesis Directors for submission and evaluation on the following month. In view of this timeline, the Doctoral Schools are invited to submit their co-supervision application files at the latest on the penultimate Friday of each month, so that the committee can examine them at the end of the month.

Doctoral Schools will be informed about accepted or rejected applications after each validation session of the Committee. They are in charge of informing the concerned Thesis Supervisors.

### 2.4. Joint supervision agreement negotiation with the set-up form:

The set-up form contains all the pedagogical and administrative dispositions that must be negotiated with the Partner Institution. Although it is given at the same time as the application file, it must not be added to the file but given by the doctoral student when he/she registers at UPEC. The aim of its distribution at the time of application is to allow Thesis Directors to anticipate all necessary dispositions for the setting-up of the Joint supervision agreement.

The content of dispositions included in the set-up form must be negotiated between the Thesis Directors of both partner countries, as well as the Doctoral Schools for the clauses for which their opinion is required.

**It is the responsibility of Thesis directors to contact the foreign institution and to make sure that all the points in the set-up form are acceptable for both parties.**

**Important: the set-up form is crucial in setting-up of the Joint supervision agreement. The clauses of the agreement must be as precise as possible and particular attention must be given to the logistical conditions of the Joint supervision achievement. Joint supervision projects without adequate financing plans to assure decent material conditions for the doctoral student will be rejected.**

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<sup>2</sup> For more details see section 2.3 of this document.

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Joint supervision projects will not be accepted if the first year administrative registration of Thesis is subscribed without the submission of the set-up form. Negotiations will not be accepted after the submission of the set-up form.

After registration of the doctoral student and communication of the application form to the 3S unit, the unit will propose a detailed framework to the partner institution, including, if necessary, dispositions added by the Partner in the set-up form. It is also possible to achieve the writing of the agreement at the initiative of the Partner Institution, which can propose its own agreement's template.

### 2.5 Administrative registration and signature of the agreement:

When the Joint supervision application is accepted, the doctoral student can be registered administratively for the doctorate at UPEC.

To do this, he/she must provide :

- The registration file filled according to the defined procedures,
- The fully completed Joint supervision application form,
- Proof of payment of the CVEC (required for all PhD students).
- If the application file provides for an exemption from the CVEC: proof of payment of tuition fees in the foreign university.

Administrative registration must take place before the end of the first academic year of study (between September and August).

As soon as negotiations are finished and all the concerned parties (Doctoral Schools, the two Thesis Directors, the doctoral student, administrations of both universities) have approved the terms of the planned agreement's, UPEC starts the signature circuit with the foreign Partner Institution.

**At UPEC, only the President is authorized to sign on behalf of the university.** Three original copies of the Joint supervision agreement are established (for each Partner Institutions and for the doctoral student).