



Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

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Cotutelle Policy

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n/a

Approved by:

Senate

Responsible Executive:

Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

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Policy-Specific Enquiries:

[School of Graduate Studies](#)

Disclaimer: If there is a discrepancy between this electronic policy and the approved copy held by the University Secretariat, the approved copy prevails.

Accessible Format Requests and General Policy Enquiries: policy@mcmaster.ca

INTRODUCTION

1. A cotutelle is a Ph.D. jointly awarded by two post-secondary institutions, typically from different countries.
2. A cotutelle degree is intended to promote international collaboration among faculty members, allowing students access to a broader range of research experience than available at a single institution.

REQUIREMENTS

3. The student must meet McMaster's admission requirements.
4. The student or supervisor must initiate arrangements for the *Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)* typically before admission or within three to nine months once in their Ph.D. study, but must finalize the cotutelle MOA within the first 12 months of their Ph.D. study.
5. The student is required to be registered full-time at both institutions.
6. Each institution must have a qualified supervisor for the student.
7. The student must meet the degree requirements at both institutions, as negotiated in the MOA.
8. A cotutelle MOA must be created between both institutions if it does not already exist. The MOA will be based on the information provided in a *Letter of Intent (LOI)*. At a minimum, the Memorandum will outline:
 - a) which institution is the *Home Institution*, and which is the *Host Institution*;
 - b) the names and titles of the supervisors;
 - c) a listing of degree requirements for each institution;
 - d) a timetable for residency and meeting degree requirements;
 - e) a schedule for progress reports and committee meetings;
 - f) intellectual property and publication details;
 - g) financial/tuition/funding details;
 - h) insurance coverage and visa requirements
 - i) options for completion if the supervisory relationship with either supervisor breaks down;
 - j) options for completion if the student fails to meet degree requirements;
 - k) the language of the thesis and defence (typically English) and details of the examination procedure;
 - l) agreement that both institutions will award a doctoral degree designated as having been completed *in cotutelle* with the other institution, and

9. The student must comply with regulations at both institutions (e.g., research ethics, etc.). The student can be processed under either university's regulations.
10. Generally, the student spends the majority of time at the Home Institution, with a minimum of one-quarter of time (approximately 12 months) at the Host Institution.
11. Students enrolled in a cotutelle program will pay tuition only to one institution at a time, typically to the Home Institution; additional administrative or ancillary fees may be required. The Faculty where the student is registered will determine any additional financial requirements. All tuition and fee requirements should appear in the cotutelle MOA.
12. As dictated by McMaster's policies, there must be a formal thesis defence. The thesis defence typically will use the procedures of the Home Institution and be defended at the Home Institution, with both thesis supervisors attending the defence (in person or remotely). The examining committee must have equal representation of voting members from both institutions (generally, two professors from each institution, though they may not necessarily be the supervisor). It must include an external examiner independent of both institutions. Both institutions must approve the selection of the external examiner(s), and the external must submit a written report to both institutions before the defence date.
13. Upon successfully completing the defence, the final thesis (typically in English) will be submitted to McMaster for dissemination through the *eThesis* program.
14. Wording on transcripts and parchments from both institutions must specify the degree was awarded as having been completed *in cotutelle* with the other institution.

PROCEDURE

15. The steps are outlined in the [cotutelle flowchart](#).
16. The student and supervisor will complete the Cotutelle Letter of Intent (LOI) (*steps 1-3*), which will be reviewed by the head of the graduate unit/department (*step 4*). The graduate program office must perform an initial assessment the student's admission eligibility before the graduate unit/department signs the LOI. All parties will sign the LOI once it is complete.
17. The LOI will then be reviewed and approved by the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies representing the student's Faculty, along with the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies (*steps 5-6*). Responsible individuals from the partner institution will also review and sign the LOI.
18. The LOI will be forwarded to the [Office of International Affairs](#) to create a Cotutelle MOA in collaboration with the Faculty Graduate Office and the School of Graduate Studies (*Steps 7-9*). The Cotutelle MOA must be approved and signed by the Faculty Dean, Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, and Vice-Provost Office of International Affairs from McMaster University, and an authorized representative of the other institution, as well as by both supervisors and the student (*Step 10*). Other signatories may be added as appropriate.

19. The MOA must be completed before the student is registered as a cotutelle student at McMaster University and eligible to attend the Host Institution (*step 11*).

RELATED POLICIES

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies, statements, and legislation. Any question about the application of this Policy or related policies shall be determined by the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies from McMaster University, or their delegate, and in conjunction with the administrator of the other policy or policies. The University reserves the right to amend or add to the University's policies and statements from time to time (this is not a comprehensive list):

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

- [McMaster University Graduate Calendar](#)
- [Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances \(RISO\)](#)
- [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Academic Freedom, Statement \(SPS E1\)](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Accessibility, Policy on](#)
- [Building an Inclusive Community with a Shared Purpose, Statement on](#)
- [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Guidelines- Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies](#)
- [Cotutelle flowchart \(MS Word docx\)](#)
- [Discrimination & Harassment Policy](#)
- [Health, Safety, Well-being, and Labour Relations – Collective Agreements](#) (*students acting in their role as Teaching Assistants are acting as University employees and should refer to their collective agreement*)
- [Group Conflict and Senate Mediation Procedures](#)
- [Research Integrity Policy](#)
- [Sexual Violence Policy](#)
- [Violence in the Workplace, Policy on](#)

LEGISLATION

- [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
- [Personal Health Information Protection Act](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)