

University of Birmingham

COLLABORATIVE DOCTORAL RESEARCHER PROVISION

**1. Topic and Purpose of the Paper**

To **consider** and **approve** a policy on collaborative doctoral researcher provision, together with potential amendments to the Collaborative Provision Policy, and processes and procedures for Colleges and Schools.

**2. Proposals**

2.1 The University of Birmingham (UoB) has been involved in collaborative doctoral researcher provision of varying types for a number of years. Potential applications have usually been from individuals, and handled through the admissions process without recourse to other procedures and/or fit with School, College and University strategies. This is no longer deemed satisfactory, in the light of a growing number of enquiries about the possibility of collaborative doctoral research provision, including joint PhD degrees from outside continental Europe.

2.2 It is proposed that:

- there shall be models of collaborative doctoral researcher provision as there are models of collaborative provision for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes of study;
- the principles set out in the Collaborative Provision Policy shall apply to collaborative doctoral researcher provision, with additional principles specific to this activity;
- there shall be processes and procedures for consideration of proposals for the development of collaborative doctoral researcher provision;
- the existing 'Principles of Joint Degrees' should be amended to refer to undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, and consideration should be given to incorporating this document, together with the principles for collaborative doctoral research provision, into one policy document for collaborative provision;
- the UoB over-arching legal agreement and individual learning agreement joint PhD degree templates should be reviewed to ensure that they are up to date, and to meet current requirements;
- the UoB legal agreement for U21 Joint PhD Degrees will be derived from the generic U21 Joint PhD legal agreement, with review and revisions to include, for example, UoB-specific items, an article referencing general research governance and ethics;

- the UoB collaborative supervision agreement template for doctoral researchers should be reviewed and updated where appropriate;
- the UoB legal agreement template for Doctoral Training Centres should be reviewed, with any revisions as appropriate;
- following consideration by this Committee, a paper should be presented to the University Learning and Teaching Committee, the University Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee and the International Board for information;
- the models and principles should be publicised more widely within UoB.

## **2.3 Models and Characteristics of Collaborative Doctoral Researcher Provision**

Only the following models of collaborative doctoral researcher provision shall be available at UoB:

### **2.3.1 Occasional Students**

- fully registered students of UoB while at UoB, usually for a few months, but not more than a year
- pay pro rata the full time fees for students for the period of registration at UoB
- come within University Legislation
- receive degree from “home” university only
- UoB provides detailed transcript (possibly non-standard) for period of time at UoB
- no legal agreement required

### **2.3.2 Collaborative Supervision/Studentships**

- may cover a range of scenarios, for example, UoB registered student spends most of their time at a research laboratory and may be an employee of the laboratory, or UoB and another University may each contribute to a studentship and provide co-supervision with the student being registered at both Universities for access to library and other facilities, but awarded the degree of only one University, or students are registered at both UoB and another university which may not have research degree awarding powers for co-supervision, with the student receiving a UoB degree
- legal agreement required for each type of arrangement, setting out the responsibilities of each university, including which university will be awarding the degree, the financial arrangements, supervision and other details
- doctoral researcher needs to travel between two universities with two supervisors

### **2.3.3 Split Location Study for Doctoral Researchers**

- UoB award
- majority of period of registration is spent either in the student’s country of residence or another country, with shorter periods at UoB, up to a maximum of one year in total
- account to be taken of, among other matters, facilities at the other proposed place(s) of study and contact with other research workers, the

- proposed arrangements for supervision
- usual UoB codes of practice apply, including split location
- tuition fees are slightly lower than for standard registration
- students may be academic members of staff in their home country who are looking to upskill as part of capacity building
- no legal agreement required
- a Split Location Checklist must be completed to confirm facilities, supervision and other arrangements for the student

#### **2.3.4 *Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs)***

- several universities make bids to the relevant Research Council(s)
- one university is designated the lead university
- each university provides modules
- programme of study must be approved through the usual University programme approval mechanism (the University Programme Approval and Review Committee) (UPARC)
- students are registered at the 'host' university, spend time in the other universities, may spend time in industry, may have supervisors from all universities and from industry or other organisations
- students come under the regulations of the 'host' university, and are awarded a degree from the 'host' university
- legal agreement required.

#### **2.3.5 *UoB Joint PhDs (usually with other European Universities)***

- fully registered student at each university, though one university will be designated the lead university
- period of registration spent at each university, with supervisors at each university
- funding arrangements (tuition fees are usually paid to the other European University, and none to UoB, as it is expected that there will be reciprocal arrangements)
- examination arrangements, normally the European-style defence of one thesis leading to a single degree being awarded, with the student meeting the academic requirements of both universities
- a single degree certificate is issued, bearing the insignia of all the universities
- over-arching legal agreement between the UoB and the other (European) University
- individual student learning agreement, though sometimes this is incorporated into the main agreement if generated by the other (European) University

#### **2.3.6 *U21 Joint PhD***

- UoB has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with 13 of the members of Universitas 21 (U21) for International Jointly Awarded PhD Degrees. These are characterised by:
  - meeting the academic requirements of both universities
  - agreement regarding a lead university
  - joint supervision
  - a single degree awarded for one PhD thesis
  - degree certificate issued which indicates that there has been joint supervision and includes the insignia of all universities..
- each U21 collaborative student programme established under the terms of the MoU will be the subject of a separate Memorandum of Agreement

(MoA) entered into between the universities and student concerned. The MoA will clarify, for example, the lead university, access to facilities, financial, examination and other arrangements.

### 3. Principles of Collaborative Doctoral Researcher Programmes

The principles enshrined in the Collaborative Provision Policy for the development of collaborative provision arrangements shall also apply to the development of collaborative doctoral researcher provision. An extract from the Collaborative Provision Policy, setting out the Principles of Collaborative Provision, is reproduced below:

#### 3.1 “4. Principles of Collaborative Provision

*The following principles **must** be adhered to when developing collaborative provision. Such provision:*

- 4.1 *must be consistent with the University’s strategic plans, arise from School/College strategic plans and be congruent with the School’s/College’s academic provision, bringing clear benefits to all those involved;*
- 4.2 *support the University’s objective to be internationally recognised as among the world’s best universities;*
- 4.3 *support the University’s objective of academic excellence;*
- 4.4 *support the University’s commitment to widening participation;*
- 4.5 *should aim to bring benefits in terms of potential for collaboration in research and scholarship;*
- 4.6 *should only be with other organisations or bodies, which have the academic standing to successfully deliver programmes of study to appropriate academic standards, the financial standing to sustain them, adequate infrastructure facilities and resources to support them and the legal standing to contract to their delivery;*
- 4.7 *should be equivalent in quality and standards to comparable awards delivered solely by the University, and must be compatible with any QAA or other relevant benchmark information;*
- 4.8 *should be comparable in student learning, support and experiences to those in the University;*
- 4.9 *should be financially viable and feasible, and be fully costed and priced accordingly;*
- 4.10 *should consider whether the geographical location of the partner might affect, for example, regular contact for monitoring academic standards, review and sharing of good practice;*
- 4.11 *should not be in competition with University of Birmingham activities already provided internally or in collaboration with other institutions;*
- 4.12 *should not be over-reliant on an individual member of staff, either within the University of Birmingham or the other organisation or body;*
- 4.13 *should not be discriminatory, for example, should be compliant with internal and national (UK or EU) legislative requirements including the Human Rights Act, the Race Relations Amendment Act, and the Disability Discrimination Act;*

- 4.14 *should not be franchised overseas (i.e. the University does not agree to authorise the delivery of the whole or part of one or more of its own approved programmes by another organisation or body leading to an award of the University);*
- 4.15 *should not be dual (or double) awards unless there are overwhelming and compelling strategic gains from the creation of such an arrangements.”*

3.2 In addition, the following should also be taken into account:

- should fit with the UoB Research and Knowledge Transfer strategy;
- should be strategically linked with particular areas of the world, for example, Australia, India, USA;
- should be strategically linked with particular universities, for example Chicago, with UoB drafting a limited list of universities outside Universitas 21 with which it could collaborate;
- should be strategically linked with the signatories to the U21 Jointly Awarded PhD Degree MoU, and the emerging UoB strategy to focus developing more effective bi-lateral collaborations within the network, which could in turn support collaborative doctoral researcher arrangements with key departments, and on a less *ad hoc*/individual student basis;
- consideration should be given to strategic links with other global networks, for example, LERU (The League of European Research Universities);
- should be a real research connection, rather than a speculative venture;
- should be reciprocity in terms of funding;
- should be arrangements with set time limits.

#### **4. Processes and Procedures**

- 4.1 The following processes and procedures shall apply to all collaborative doctoral researcher provision:
- 4.1.1 all proposals for the development of collaborative doctoral researcher provision must have been considered and approved through the normal School/College/University (ie UPARC) mechanisms, and must fit with the School/College and University strategies. Where a new programme of study is required as part of the development, it must be approved through the usual School/College/University (ie UPARC) mechanisms.
- 4.1.2 all proposals for the development of collaborative doctoral researcher provision must be notified to the Collaborative Provision Manager and/or International Relations at an early stage so that appropriate advice can be given on processes and procedures, and documentation, including legal agreements. The University's reputation can be at risk from ill-planned and managed activities;
- 4.1.3 where there are defined strategic links with other universities, approval must be through the normal admissions procedures, in accordance with the UoB Code of Practice on Admission of Postgraduate Research Students or any

successor Code, and approved by the Head of School or nominee;

*(Note: Under the UoB Code of Practice on the Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Research Students (clause 2.1) “The Head of School is responsible for the co-ordination of arrangements for supervision of students. However, the Head of School may choose to delegate the operation of such arrangements to another member of academic staff. In either case it should be made clear to all staff and students who is undertaking this task”.)*

- 4.1.4 where there are no defined strategic links, information must be sought from International Relations concerning any international institutions, and approval must be by the Head of School or nominee as well as by a Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality), via the form, attached as Appendix A;
- 4.1.5 collaborative doctoral researcher provision should be covered with the relevant legal agreement or Split Location Checklist, where appropriate.

## **5. Consultation**

Consultations have been undertaken with the Pro-Vice-Chancellors' Management Team, International Relations, the Graduate School Management Board and within Academic and Student Administration.

## **6. Arguments to Support Proposal**

- 6.1 Clear principles and procedures, which can be more widely publicised within UoB, are provided to support the development of strategic collaborative doctoral researcher provision rather than *ad hoc* or individual student arrangements, which has hitherto been the norm.
- 6.2 UoB has the legal and regulatory capacity to engage in collaborative doctoral researcher provision. *(Note: assurance, through the Proposal for Collaborative Doctoral Researcher Provision form at Appendix A, that any collaborative institution has the legal and regulatory capacity to undertake and/or make awards through collaborative doctoral research arrangements must be sort. Not every University with the legal capacity to award, for example, joint degrees at doctoral level does so.)*
- 6.3 Furthermore, this development should:
  - support the internationalisation strategy, by demonstrating “international” commitment, raising the international visibility and prestige of UoB, together with the brand advantage of recruitment;
  - strengthen academic research collaborations, facilities and resources, which may result in jointly authored international papers, potentially contributing to enhanced citation;
  - raise the esteem and recognition of individual staff internationally;
  - extend the expertise of staff (staff development and exchange);
  - maximise scarce intellectual and physical resources;
  - broaden the experience of students;
  - recognise increasing student demand for flexible modes of delivery and predicted growth in Trans National Education (TNE);

- set out clear arrangements for the parties in legal agreements.

## **7. Conclusion**

APRC is requested **to consider**, and, if thought appropriate, **approve**, the broad principles and policy for collaborative doctoral researcher provision, together with Appendix A: form for Proposal for Collaborative Doctoral Researcher Provision.



**University of Birmingham**  
**Proposal for Collaborative Doctoral Researcher Provision**

This form has been designed to help Schools/Colleges consider a range of issues, **BEFORE** proceeding with any potential development, where there are no defined strategic links for collaborative doctoral researcher provision. In legal terms this is called 'due diligence', and is a vital part of the approval process. The questions may also help in later discussions and preparation of any legal agreement.

This form should be used in conjunction with the principles for the development of collaborative provision arrangements.

Should you wish to discuss the completion of this form, please contact Margaret Cannadine (m.e.cannadine@bham.ac.uk).

**Proposing College/School**

UoB College	
UoB School	
Proposer's Name	
Proposer's Telephone Number	
Proposer's Email Address	
Proposed Start Date	

**Proposed Collaborative Institution and Research**

Full Name of Collaborative Institution	
Full Registered Address	
Contact Name	
Contact Job Title	
Contact School/Department	
Main Contact Email Address	
Background Information about the Collaborative Institution	
Type of Collaborative Arrangement	See Models of Collaborative Doctoral Researcher Provision
How many students will be involved, and what will be term of the arrangement?	
If a joint award, please indicate whether it has been confirmed that the collaborative institution has the legal and regulatory capacity to grant awards jointly with another institution:	<p>Can grant awards jointly with another institution? <i>(Supporting documentation should be provided.)</i></p> <p>Is in the process of putting in place legal and regulatory capacity to grant awards jointly? <i>(Please indicate a date when this is likely to be in place.)</i></p> <p>Cannot currently grant awards jointly with another institution. <i>(If this is the case, no further work can be undertaken on this proposal.)</i></p>
Does the School have any other collaborative arrangements with the proposed collaborative institution? If yes,	

please provide details, including evidence of ongoing or developing research collaboration.	
What is the topic of the proposed research?	
Will a language other than English be involved? If yes, is there anyone within the School/College at UoB competent in the other language? If no, please explain how any language difficulties will be handled.	
Why would collaborative doctoral researcher provision enhance the proposed topic of research?	
Does UoB have any other arrangements with the proposed collaborative institution? If yes, please provide details.	

### **Rationale for the Proposed Collaborative Arrangement**

Fit with UoB's Strategies, including internationalisation	
Fit with College's Strategic Plan	
Fit with College's Existing Portfolio of programmes both taught and research	
Academic and other advantages of the collaboration to the University/College/School	

### **Admission and Registration**

Will the student be required to fulfil the admission requirements for each institution, including English Language?	
Which institution will be responsible for issuing the offer letter?	
Will the students be registered at both institutions?	
What will be the registration procedures when the student is based at the other institution?	

### **Period of Registration**

Please indicate the proposed periods of registration at each institution:	Year 1
	Year 2
	Year 3
	Year 4

### **Resources**

Please confirm that all necessary resources (eg, laboratory or library resources) to support the research are in place at one or both institutions.	
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**Training Needs Analysis**

Which institution will undertake the Training Needs Analysis?	
How will the TNA be undertaken when the student is not at UoB?	

**Supervision**

Names of main supervisors at each institution, including supervisory experience	
Names of other members of the supervisory team and their roles	
What arrangements will be made for the supervisors to visit the student, and maintain contact with each other?	
What processes are proposed for the student's supervision when moving to the other institution. (This should include an update of progress to date, and planned progress for the next stage of the research.)	
What arrangements are in place to handle any difficulties in the supervisory arrangements should they arise or with the need to replace a supervisor who leaves?	

**Academic Progress Monitoring**

What processes are proposed to monitor a student's progress throughout the period of registration?	
Who will decide about extensions of time or suspensions of study that the student may require?	

**Language of Thesis, Synopsis and Examination**

What is the proposed language?	Thesis
	Synopsis
	Examination

**Examination of Thesis and Related Matters**

To which institution will the thesis be submitted?	
At which institution will the examination of the thesis take place?	
What processes have been agreed for the appointment of examiners to meet the regulations of both institutions?	
What is the proposed process for the	

examination and the outcomes of the viva voce examination?	
What are the proposed interim awards for a student who does not complete or fails the award of a PhD?	
At which institution it is expected that the student will attend a graduation ceremony to have their degree conferred?	

### **Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights**

What will be the arrangements for copyright and IPR?	
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### **Research Governance and Ethics**

What will be the arrangements for research governance and ethics?	
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### **Financial Arrangements**

Which institution will receive the student fee?	
Will there be any division of the student fee? If yes, in what proportions?	
Who will be responsible for any accommodation fees?	
Which institution will be responsible for the payment of the examiners?	
What are the funding arrangements for travel for supervisors?	
Is there any external funding to support this arrangement?	

### **Approvals: UoB**

Supervisor(s)	Name: Signature: Date:
Head of School	Name: Signature: Date:
Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching Quality)	Name: Signature: Date:

### **Approvals: Collaborative Organisation**

Supervisor(s)	Name: Signature: Date:
Head of School or nominee	Name: Signature: Date:

Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor or nominee	Name: Signature: Date:
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