

Guidance 5(xiv) Management of Dual Doctoral Research Programmes Procedure

1. Introduction

This procedure sets out the minimum requirements specific to the management of all dual doctoral research programmes and co-tutelle agreements at Middlesex University. This procedure should be read alongside the Postgraduate Research Degrees Regulations.

This procedure is for Doctoral Research Degrees only, for UG and PGT Dual Awards and Double Degrees please refer to Guidance 5(viii)

2. Scope and definitions

This procedure is applicable to Middlesex University staff, external collaborators and all full-time / part-time PGRs registered on dual doctoral research programmes.

A dual doctoral research programme is defined as a collaborative arrangement that leads to separate awards from two equal partner institutions. *It is not defined as a partnership between institutions in the sense of a franchised, validated or joint research degree; the research degrees programmes remain distinct. The PGR is seeking an award that combines two distinct degrees, hence the denomination of “dual” rather than “joint”.*

Dual awards can be established only with institution that have full research degrees awarding powers and that are well-established higher education institutions. Each partner is responsible for making its own award which references the collaboration with the partner institution, but the two components form a single research experience with a single thesis submission and the programme is managed cooperatively between the two institutions. As such, an agreed approach to management, delivery and oversight is required.

3. Purpose

This procedure provides a framework to ensure that Middlesex University PGRs registered on a dual doctoral research programme have a positive experience comparable with other PGRs and seeks to protect the reputation and standing of Middlesex University by setting clear expectations and responsibilities for all parties involved in the management, delivery and oversight of the programme.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of relevant Middlesex University staff, external collaborators and PGRs registered on a dual doctoral research programme to adhere to this procedure.

5. Key Principles for the Management of Dual Doctoral Research Programmes

Institutional standing:

Both institutions have equal standing within the arrangement but the home / lead institution for each PGR will be, unless otherwise agreed, the one at which the PGR was recruited and first attends and the one to provide (in case of funded place) the PGR with a living stipend, scholarship or salary or (in case of self-funded place) where they PGR pays their fees.

Administrative and academic management:

- Following approval, and once an MoU between institutions is in place, a joint PGR management committee will be established to oversee all the elements of the programme (from recruitment to examination) ensuring that the PGR experience and the academic standards of each institution are maintained.
- The joint PGR Management Committee for the dual awards is composed by members of the relevant faculties for each institution. On the Middlesex side, a PGR lead must also be present.
- A researcher development plan agreed by all parties is required for each individual PGR registered to the programme.
- Day-to-day management of the individual PGR must be undertaken by the relevant Faculty Doctoral Academics.

Postgraduate research progression:

Dual awards are subject to annual progression and to evidencing work at the appropriate level.

Marketing and recruitment:

Once a dual doctoral research programme has been approved, information about opportunities to study for a dual award should be provided in any publicity or other information available to PGRs and a joint marketing plan should be agreed via the joint management committee.

All PGRs recruited to a dual doctoral research programme will be required to complete the application form at Middlesex University and at the partner institution (consideration should be given to appropriate processes and entry requirements at both institutions).

It is advised that a joint offer letter is issued but separate offer letters may be more appropriate. If both institutions are in agreement over separate offer letters, the information must be consistent in terms of the content covered. Offer letters must include information about how the arrangement will operate, including fee and attendance and other programme requirements and must refer the applicant to the relevant legal agreements.

Registration:

Each PGR studying towards a dual doctoral award will register at each of the collaborating institutions concurrently for the duration of the programme. At Middlesex University, PGRs will be required to register for each year of the degree in the same way as PGRs in other programmes.

Fees and funding:

The PGR dual award fee is negotiable on a case-by-case basis, according to the length of time the PGR will spend at each institution and the costs associated with participating in the programme. The PGR pays their fee to the home institution.

Mode of study:

Dual PGR programmes can be offered on either full-time or part-time basis.

Attendance requirements:

PGRs registered on a dual doctoral research programme will normally be expected to spend 50% of the programme at each institution dependent on the requirements of the programme (as a minimum the total period of attendance at the collaborating institution should be 12 months, full time).

All PGRs registered on a dual doctoral research programme will be required to meet their joint supervisory team, undertake a development needs analysis and attend any subject specific training at the start of their programme.

The precise attendance requirements for each PGR on a dual doctoral research programme will be agreed between the collaborating institutions and approved at Middlesex University via the relevant faculty PGR committee. It will be clearly stated in the PGR's individual study plan.

Any subsequent changes to the schedule of attendance must be agreed by the PGR, both institutions, the faculty PGR committee and recorded in an amended agreement.

Information and support:

All PGRs registered on a dual doctoral research programme must have an induction at the start of their degree.

There must be assurances that the collaborating institution has robust structures in place to support PGRs who encounter any problems and there must be provision of clear information to PGRs about academic support and pastoral support services available to them.

Researcher development:

All PGRs registered on a dual doctoral research programme must complete a researcher development plan. This may be provided by the Middlesex University or the partner organisation, as appropriate, but must meet Middlesex University requirements.

Where researcher development provision is not delivered by the Middlesex University it must be established that the provision is appropriate, of a high standard and comparable with researcher development delivered to PGRs based at Middlesex University.

Research culture and environment:

PGRs must have ready access to an active research environment / culture and appropriate resources to undertake their research effectively at both the home and collaborative institutions.

Dual award PGRs should have access to library facilities, IT facilities, adequate work space, other specialist equipment, as necessary.

Dual award PGRs should have opportunities to interact and share ideas with experienced researchers and academic staff, attend and present at seminars / conferences and receive support in finding out about and getting involved in current research.

Dual award PGRs should have the opportunity to represent their peers and provide feedback on the programme / their research experience.

Supervision

Supervisory practice for dual award PhDs must meet all the requirements on supervision as set out in the University's Postgraduate Research Regulations. They must have a designated main supervisor at both Middlesex University and the collaborative institution. Further co-supervisors are encouraged where required.

The main supervisors at each institution and the PGR should meet at least once a month. This can include virtual meetings in addition to meetings in person. The institutional level contract will include detailed information about the supervision arrangements.

Detailed information about dual supervision arrangements will also be outlined in the individual PGR study plan. The Research Development Plan should include details on how often the PGR and the main/co-supervisors will meet as well as how meetings will be organised when the PGR is away from the University.

Dual Awards PGRs have the opportunity to use the complaints and appeal procedures of both institutions, according to the outcome sought.

Monitoring progress:

The requirements of the University's Postgraduate Research Regulations must be met for monitoring the progress of PGRs registered on a dual award. Formal progression monitoring (taking place at least annually) and assessment for continuation on the programme will be managed via the joint supervisory team. The process for formal progression monitoring must be agreed at the outset and details must be included in the MoU.

In addition to monitoring progress at the Middlesex University, regular communication should be maintained with the collaborating institution via the joint management committee to ensure any issues are identified and addressed at an early stage so that the PGR can be supported effectively.

Consideration should be given to monitoring the PGR's progress whilst they are away from the Middlesex University, especially where the programme involves periods of fieldwork or other absences from the collaborating institutions.

Details of the arrangements to manage the communication with, and support for, the PGR should be clearly laid out in the institutional contract and individual PGR study plan.

Arrangements for managing PGR appeals, complaints, conduct and discipline will be considered and detailed in the institutional level collaborative agreement / proposal.

Thesis:

A dual doctoral research programme requires the same single thesis to be submitted to both institutions. The process for thesis submission should be agreed by both partners as part of the institutional level collaborative agreement / proposal.

Examination:

Each institution is responsible for examination of the thesis and wherever possible this should be done via a joint examination panel with a single viva process with consideration for following each institution's own internal process and regulations.

Where a single examination process is not possible, full consideration must be given to how the examination process will be conducted, including timeframes for the separate exams and how different outcomes from the examination panels will be managed. It may be possible to agree that the PGR will follow the examination process at the home institution but the arrangements for examination must be included in the collaborative agreement. If it is necessary that each institution examines separately, it will make its own recommendation on the award from that institution. Every endeavour should be made to minimise the impact of separate examination processes for the PGR.

Certification:

PGRs who successfully complete the dual doctoral research programme at both institutions, will graduate with a PhD from both institutions and will receive a degree certificate from each university each of which will state clearly that the degree was obtained through a dual award arrangement naming the collaborating institution. The degree titles awarded and thesis title must be the same.

If a PGR only completes or meets the assessment or progression requirements for one of the awarding bodies, they will receive only one award from that single institution. In this case the dual award agreement will be terminated.

Graduation:

The successful candidate may attend a graduation ceremony at each awarding University.