Recommendations and procedures to be followed regarding Joint Supervision Agreements

between the University of Lausanne (UNIL)

and

a foreign institution authorised to award doctoral degrees

1. The joint supervision of a thesis is designed to ensure that doctoral students benefit from scientific cooperation and complementary knowledge between two institutions.

2. The special feature of a joint supervision is that doctoral students carry on their research work under the joint responsibility of two thesis supervisors (one at UNIL and one at an institution abroad).

3. This joint supervision must include time spent by the doctoral student at the partner university (minimum duration of six months in one or more stays spread over the entire duration of thesis work).

4. The intention to set up a joint supervision arrangement is formalised in each case by the signing of an agreement between the two concerned institutions.

5. This agreement must be signed by the doctoral student, both thesis supervisors, both Deans/or equivalent and the legal representatives of both institutions (Rectors/Presidents/Chancellors - at UNIL by the Vice Rector in charge of the dicastery Careers and Society). The doctoral student is in charge of ensuring that all documents and information are transferred to both institutions. He or she is responsible for the administrative aspects of the procedure, in close collaboration with the International Relations office and relevant persons in the Faculties and services of UNIL and the partner university.

6. The signing of a joint supervision Agreement is possible with institutions with which UNIL has signed a cooperation agreement. For other universities, applications will be examined on a case by case basis by the International Relations Office.

7. Through this Agreement, each institution commits itself to confer the doctoral degree based on a favourable report of the committee of examiners. Thus, both institutions award each a doctoral diploma for the same thesis. The text of each of the two diplomas must specify the fact that the doctoral degree is delivered in the framework of a joint supervision between UNIL and the partner institution, to avoid any possible implication that two doctorates have been awarded.

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1 A joint supervision must not be confused with co-supervision of a thesis, which does not require the signing of an agreement. A doctoral student under co-supervision is supervised by a thesis supervisor from UNIL, in collaboration with a Professor from another university. Only the university of origin may award the doctoral degree. See Directive of the Rectorate 3.11 Co-supervision of theses.

2 For periods of less than six months, a thesis co-supervision is recommended.
8. For UNIL doctoral students, a joint supervision Agreement may only be put in place during the first two years of registration as a doctoral student. The same time limit applies to doctoral students coming from a partner university.

9. The setting up of a joint supervision implies the doctoral student’s registration and/or admission to both concerned institutions. The doctoral student must therefore meet the administrative requirements (admission criteria, regulations, courses, doctoral examinations, time limits) of both institutions. Registration fees for each semester are paid to one of the institutions throughout the duration of the thesis, or arrangements for alternate payments are made by the two universities. The doctoral student is exempted from fees at the other institution, under reservation of imposed fixed fees. Following approval by the Faculty, this distribution must be indicated in the Agreement. The exemption of fees is possible only once the Agreement is duly signed and returned before the admission deadline of the targeted semester.

10. In principle, one of the two institutions organises the oral examination of the thesis and pays the cost of travel, meals and accommodation incurred by jury members from the partner institution. The other institution organises the thesis colloquium which must precede the oral examination (if stipulated in the relevant regulations of the Faculty of UNIL) pays the cost of travel, meals and accommodation incurred by jury members from the partner institution. These arrangements may vary according to the regulations in force in each institution and must be indicated in the joint supervision Agreement. In any case, costs must be split between the two institutions.

11. On a competitive basis, “swissuniversities” provides financial support for joint supervision projects, provided they are specified in a cooperation Agreement between a Swiss university and a partner University in Europe. Information concerning the competitive tendering of these grants is available on the website of “swissuniversities” (www.swissuniversities.ch > topics > Promotion of young talents > Cotutelles de thèse).

Procedure to be followed by the doctoral student

- Identify a thesis supervisor in each of the concerned institutions and obtain the approval of both thesis supervisors for a joint supervision at UNIL and at the other university. In the same time, check the admission and registration conditions in both institutions. Be aware of deadlines (For UNIL: www.unil.ch/immat).

- Ensure that the thesis subject is accepted by the relevant Faculty in each of the two institutions in accordance with regulations in force (each thesis supervisor makes appropriate arrangements in the own Faculty after a proposal has been submitted by the doctoral student).

- Obtain approval of the joint supervision project from the relevant Faculty by writing a cover letter explaining the reasons for establishing a joint supervision. This letter must be signed by the doctoral student and by the thesis supervisor at UNIL, (according to the rules of some Faculties at UNIL, the thesis supervisor’s signature of the other university might also be necessary). Once the letter approved and forwarded to the International Relations Office (IRO), the joint supervision Agreement can be set up.
• Complete all sections of the joint supervision Agreement (a specimen is available from the IRO) and indicate the name and position of the different people required to sign the Agreement.

• Before signing, submit the draft Agreement to the IRO and to the responsible person at the partner University, who will examine it with the concerned departments.

• Make changes to the document where necessary.

• Ensure you have sickness and accident insurance coverage in both countries for the entire duration of the thesis.

• Once the Agreement is approved by the administrators of both institutions, obtain signatures in hierarchical order, starting with the doctoral student, the thesis supervisors and the Deans or equivalent. Then forward copies of the Agreement to the IRO at UNIL, which will arrange for them to be signed by the Vice-Rector.

• Once the Agreement is duly signed, send back the requested number of originals to the administration of both institutions.

• It is up to the doctoral student to pay attention to the dates of expiration of the joint supervision Agreement as well as to the semester registration in both universities.

*RI UNIL/25.8.2016*