

Agreement governing Double Degrees of PhD Candidates

Between

the University of Bergen (UiB)

and

XXX

(hereafter jointly referred to as “the Parties”)

PREAMBLE

The double PhD degree agreement between the University of Bergen (UiB), Norway, and partner institution (XXX), country, proceeds from the existing scientific collaboration between the two universities.

This agreement is in accordance with the Norwegian Act Relating to Universities and University Colleges of April 1, 2005¹, and the Regulations for the Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) degree at the University of Bergen, of 24th November 2022². [Add equivalent formulation from partner institution]

All parties commit themselves to act in conformity with the institutions' regulations and codes of practice regarding doctoral awards.

1. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. Under this Agreement the parties are jointly responsible for the candidates' research, learning outcome, management of the double PhD degree education, quality assurance, and evaluation of the education.
- 1.2. The parties will cooperate on admission, progress, examinations and issuing of the double PhD degree.
- 1.3. The objective of the double PhD degree is to admit the candidates to a joint PhD education at both collaborating universities and to fulfil the requirements of these universities, while producing only one thesis and making only one final examination. The successful candidate will be conferred one diploma and one degree from each institution. The diplomas will have cross-reference.
- 1.4. The parties must as far as possible ensure that admitted candidates are not given an extra workload.
- 1.5. The parties must set up an individual agreement for each candidate admitted to the double PhD degree education. The individual agreement must state the requirements for admittance to and completion of the double PhD degree education. The requirements herein are based on the Regulations for the Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) degree at the University of Bergen and on the rules (programme description) of the faculty PhD programme to which the candidate is affiliated. [Add here the equivalent formulation from the partner institution]
- 1.6. Admittance to the partner institution must take place no later than one year after the candidate has been admitted to her/his home institution.
- 1.7. The names of the doctoral degree shall be Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) at UiB and add equivalent name of PhD degree.
- 1.8. *Only if a scientific committee is not established:* The heads of the respective faculties/schools involved shall mediate in any scientific disagreements that may occur between the candidates and/or the supervisors.]

¹ [Act relating to universities and university colleges - Lovdata](#)

² [Regulations for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor \(PhD\) at the University of Bergen - Lovdata](#)

2. SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE [Only if a group of candidates are involved]

- 2.1. The double PhD degree education will be coordinated by a scientific committee. Each university shall appoint X members to the scientific committee. The [name of board or unit at both institutions] shall appoint members to the scientific committee. The scientific committee shall be appointed and active within two months of the signature of this agreement.
- 2.2. The scientific committee shall cooperate on the coordination and on the development of the scientific content of the double PhD degree education. The scientific committee shall mediate in any scientific disagreements that may occur between the candidates and/or the supervisors. The committee shall not deliberate and decide unless both institutions and half of the members are present. Decisions shall be made by a simple majority.
- 2.3. The committee shall be appointed and active within two months of the signature of this agreement.

3. ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION

- 3.1. The candidates must fulfil the criteria for admission to the double PhD degree education, registration, training and examination at both universities and the respective faculty/school.
- 3.2. The candidates should undertake a joint research project with supervisors from both universities.
- 3.3. The candidates must meet the admission requirements at both institutions. The applicant is required to hold a master's degree. The application must contain a project proposal and progress plan. The application for admission to the double PhD degree education is to be evaluated and decided upon by the faculty to which the candidate will be affiliated at UiB and [add equivalent formulation from partner institution].

4. DURATION OF STUDIES

- 4.1. The standard length of the PhD education standard is 3 full time work years, from starting date to the date of thesis submission. In the event of statutory leave, the agreement period is extended correspondingly. The candidates are responsible for reporting and documenting such interruptions.
- 4.2. The agreement period may be extended due to delay during the course of the PhD education. An extended period may only be admitted upon a favourable opinion by the supervisors and the two institutions and any sponsoring bodies.

5. MOBILITY AND INTEGRATION AT PARTNER INSTITUTION

- 5.1. PhD candidates under the double PhD degree education will spend at least 3 months altogether at the partner institution for research, supervision and coursework, to be specified in their individual agreements.

- 5.2. PhD candidates will be fully integrated into the research environment at the partner institution by online participation. The candidates will become member of a relevant research group(s) and/or PhD research school at the partner institution and take part in its activities online. The candidates will take part online in the activities of its fellow PhD candidates at the partner institution's department or faculty.

6. SUPERVISION

- 6.1. Work on the PhD thesis is to take place under individual supervision. The faculties and academic supervisors must jointly ensure that the candidate participates in an active research environment.
- 6.2. The supervisors must have a doctoral degree or equivalent academic competence within the subject area and be an active researcher. At least one of the appointed supervisors should normally have previous experience of supervision of candidates at the PhD level. The supervisors will be appointed consistent with the supervision policies of UiB and XXX.
- 6.3. There shall be at least one supervisor at each university, where one should be the main supervisor. The main supervisor has the overall responsibility for the supervision, and for the coordination between the supervisors. The main supervisor has a specific, delegated responsibility to follow up with the candidate in terms of practical matters and regulations at the main supervisor's institution. One co-supervisor from the other institution must be appointed with a specific, delegated responsibility to follow up with the candidate in terms of practical matters and regulations at this supervisor's institution. Additional co-supervisors from either university or any other university may be appointed as required.
- 6.4. The main supervisor is to be the candidate's primary contact. The candidate and supervisors should be in regular contact. The main supervisor is responsible for following up on the candidate's academic development and is to advise on the training component. Contact frequency should be stated in the annual progress reporting.
- 6.5. The supervisors are obliged to keep informed on the progress of the candidate's work and assess this in relation to the project description's progress plan. The supervisors are obliged to follow up on academic conditions that may incur delayed completion of the PhD education, so that it can be completed within the standard time.
- 6.6. The supervisors will give advice on formulating and delimiting the research topic and research questions, discuss and assess hypotheses and methods, discuss results and their interpretation(s), discuss the structure and completion of the presentation (including outline, linguistic form, documentation), and provide guidance on the academic literature and data. Supervisors must give the candidate guidance in matters of research ethics related to the thesis.
- 6.7. The supervisors shall enter into an agreement that states their obligations. The supervisor's agreement must reflect the supervisor's particular responsibility to follow up with the candidate in terms of practical matters and regulations at the supervisor's institution, according to § 6.3. and 6.4.
- 6.8. Should one of the supervisors leave their institution, the normal procedures for replacing the supervisor will be followed, with the involvement of the other supervisor.

7. TRAINING COMPONENT

- 7.1. The candidate must complete a training component of 30 ECTS, equivalent to one semester's workload, with relevance for the research conducted by the candidate. The institutions must in the candidate's individual agreement agree upon how the candidate shall undertake the training component of the programme. The training component must provide training in academic dissemination, theory of science and ethics, and research methods.
- 7.2. A maximum of 10 credits of the total 30 credits may be earned prior to admission, as long as they have been earned no more than five (5) years prior to the date of admission. Inclusion of course credits earned prior to admission must be based on their relevance to the PhD research, are subjects of application and must be accepted by both parties.
- 7.3. The training component must be completed and approved before the thesis is submitted.
- 7.4. There shall be joint recognition of courses included in the double PhD degree education given at both universities. Care should be taken to avoid overlap between courses. This is mainly the supervisors' responsibility.
- 7.5. Documentation of course work must be done through approved transcripts in English from either university.

8. FORMAT OF THESIS

- 8.1. The thesis must be an independent, academic work that meets international standards, and must be at an advanced academic level in respect of the formulation of the research topic, conceptual clarification, and methodical, theoretical, and empirical rationale, as well as in respect of the documentation of sources and formal presentation. The thesis must be able to develop new knowledge in the chosen field and must be of such quality as to qualify for publication as a part of the academic literature in the field.
- 8.2. The thesis may take the form of a monograph, or several pieces of work (e.g., scientific articles/papers) that form a consistent, coherent, and unified whole. If the thesis takes the form of several pieces of work, the candidate must write a summarising article that accounts for the thesis as a whole.
- 8.3. Work that has been approved as the basis for previously completed exams or degrees will not be accepted for assessment even when the work is submitted in re-written form, unless the work is included as a smaller section of a thesis that consists of multiple interrelated works. Data, analyses, or methods from previous degrees may nevertheless be used as the basis for the work on the PhD project. Published works may not be accepted as part of the thesis if they, at the time of admission, are older than five (5) years from the date of publishing.
- 8.4. The thesis must be written in English.

9. PROGRESS REPORTING AND MID-TERM REVIEW

- 9.1. At UiB, the candidate and main supervisor must submit each year separate progress reports on the progress of the PhD education. **[add equivalent formulation from partner institution,**

if any]. In connection with the progress reporting, the candidate and main supervisor shall review the plan for the project and assess the need for adjustments. Significant changes should be approved by the UiB faculty and [add relevant unit].

- 9.2. Each PhD candidate's work must be subject to a mid-way evaluation. As a main rule, the mid-way evaluation will include academic input from researchers within the candidate's field and/or related fields. The main purpose of the mid-way evaluation is to help the candidate identify issues that entail a risk for the project to stop or being delayed, as well as providing input that may increase the quality of the work. The faculty, supervisors and candidate are actively obliged to follow up conditions that may lead to a risk of a delay in the completion or non-completion of the PhD education, so that the education, as far as possible, can be completed within the standard time frame. Details regarding each candidate's mid-way evaluation must be stated in the individual agreement.

10. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

10.1. The PhD candidate must satisfy:

- a. Approved academic training component
- b. Approved written thesis
- c. An approved trial lecture on an assigned topic
- d. Approved public defence

10.2. The parties must decide which of the partner institutions who will be coordinating and making the final decisions in the assessment process (hereafter referred to as the Coordinating institution). The other institution will be consulted on all decisions regarding the assessment process. Details regarding this must be stated in the individual agreement.

10.3. The coordinating institution shall appoint an expert assessment committee of at least four members consisting of two internal examiners, one each from UiB and XXX, and two external examiners. Rules on impartiality contained in the national legislation of Norway³ and relevant country apply to the members of the committee. The Norwegian Public Administration Act implies that the supervisors cannot be members of the expert assessment committee.

10.4. The assessment committee will be responsible for the assessment of the thesis, the trial lecture, and the public defence.

10.5. Reworking of a submitted PhD thesis

The assessment committee may, on the basis of the submitted PhD thesis and any additional material, recommend that the candidate to make minor revisions to the thesis before the committee submits its final report. A deadline up to but not exceeding three (3) months will be set for completing such revisions.

³ [Public administration act, Section 6](#)

If the committee finds that major changes are needed in order to deem the thesis worthy of a public defence, the committee must recommend that the thesis is rejected.

10.6. Procedures relating to the assessment committee's recommendation

If the deciding body at the coordinating institution finds that there is reasonable doubt as to whether the committee's recommendation should be endorsed, or if the committee delivers a split recommendation, the deciding body at the coordinating institution shall seek further clarification from the assessment committee or appoint two new experts to give individual statements on the thesis.

Any additional or individual statements must be presented to the PhD candidate, who must be given the opportunity to comment.

11. RESUBMISSION

- 11.1. A PhD thesis that has not been found worthy of defence, may be re-evaluated in a revised version. A revision and new assessment can only be made once.

12. PUBLICATION

- 12.1. An accepted thesis must at the latest be publicly available two (2) weeks before the public defence is held. The thesis must be made available in the form in which it was submitted for assessment.
- 12.2. No restrictions may be placed on publication of the PhD thesis, with the exception of a previously agreed postponement of the public release date. Such a postponement may be permitted to allow the institution and any external party that has provided full or partial funding for the PhD education to decide on any commercialisation including patents. Neither the parties nor an external party may require that the thesis in whole or in part can be withheld from the public domain.

13. TRIAL LECTURE AND PUBLIC DEFENCE

13.1. Trial lecture

The candidate must give a trial lecture after the thesis has been submitted and approved. The trial lecture is an independent part of the examination for the PhD degree. The purpose is to test the candidate's ability to acquire knowledge beyond the topic of the thesis, and the ability to communicate it in a lecture setting. The trial lecture must be on an assigned topic and should have a duration of 45 minutes. The topic of the trial lecture is advised to the candidate ten (10) working days before the lecture. The trial lecture will be performed in English.

The trial lecture must be approved before the public defence may take place.

13.2. Public defence

The public defence is to take place at XXX.

The PhD candidate must give a public defence of the scientific work in the thesis, conducted

in English. The public defence must be an academic discussion between opponents and the PhD candidate regarding the formulation of the research topic, methodical and theoretical rationale, as well as in respect of the documentation of sources and formal presentation. The time and place of the public defence shall be announced at least ten (10) working days in advance.

The public defence must be approved before the degree can be conferred.

- 13.3. The approved thesis and PhD research will be presented at a seminar at XXX after the public defence has been approved.

14. DIPLOMA, DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT AND GRADUATION CEREMONIES

UiB and XXX will produce a diploma and a diploma supplement each. The two diplomas will have identical content when it comes to the description of each candidate's PhD education, more specifically name of the thesis, name of the supervisors, name of completed PhD courses, name of members of the assessment committee and vital dates in the completion process. Digital versions of the diplomas will be issued, which will provide added content for increased cross-reference and ensure authenticity of the documentation. The diplomas and diploma supplements will include a statement: "This PhD degree has been carried out under joint PhD education between the University of Bergen and xxx xxxxx".

A Latin language ceremonial diploma will in addition be issued by UiB. An English translation will be attached to the ceremonial diploma.

The PhD degree and diplomas may be presented at graduation ceremonies at either university and will be announced as the award of a double PhD degree. More details regarding graduation ceremony may be stated in the individual agreement.

15. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

The intellectual property rights (IPR) of the PhD research are subject to the IPR-regulations of the involved parties. Issues related to IPR and the regulations of rights, when relevant, must be formalized in a separate agreement.

16. OPEN ACCESS

PhD candidates are strongly encouraged to make published research results available through free electronically available databases, At UiB the database is named Bergen Open Research Archive - BORA, and at [add relevant information for partner institution, if any].

17. FINANCIAL MATTERS

17.1. Funding

Potential candidates for the double PhD degree education must upon admission have secured financing for the full 3 years of PhD education. Details of the financing must be stated in the individual agreement.

17.2. Fees

PhD candidates will not pay tuition fees to UiB during their visit there. UiB cannot charge tuition fees independently or on behalf of partner institutions. [add relevant information for partner institution, if any]

18. COMMITMENT

This joint PhD agreement must ensure participation from partner institution and UiB throughout the whole process from admission to the completion of the degree.

19. CONTINUATION, WITHDRAWAL AND TERMINATION

If a candidature is terminated, the decision must take into consideration what should happen to the work done under the double PhD degree education. The prevailing conditions for continuation, withdrawal and termination of candidatures of the candidate's home university will apply.

20. SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

Should a dispute arise, the parties shall endeavour to settle their disputes amicably. Any dispute, controversy or claim arising out of or relating to this agreement shall be settled by negotiation between the boards/Academic Unit Research Committees of postgraduate studies of the two universities. In the event, and to the extent, that the boards have not resolved the dispute within two months of the commencement of the negotiation the dispute shall be referred to the rectors of the universities for mediation. If such attempts do not succeed, the mediation will be led by a neutral, third party chosen and approved by both. If such attempts do not succeed, the dispute may be brought before a mutually agreeable, neutral legal venue. If the parties are not able to agree on a mutually agreeable, neutral venue, the dispute may be brought before the Bergen District Court as the legal venue.

21. EFFECTIVE DATE AND TERMINATION

This Agreement is valid for from the date of signature until XX.XX.XXXX and it is automatically extended by two years unless terminated by either university with a notice

period of one year. If terminated, it will not affect the registered PhD candidates until the degree is awarded according to the regulations.

DATE

DATE

XXX XXXXX XXX XXXXX

XXXXXXXX XXXXX

Rector

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

UNIVERSITY OF XXXXXXXXXX