



Policy for Split-Site PhD and other Graduate Research Degree Arrangements

ACADEMIC POLICY

Approved by Academic Council on **28 April 2011**

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Policy Title	Policy for Split-Site PhD and other Graduate Research Degree Arrangements
Policy Officer	Lynn Foster, Academic Secretariat
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NOTE: This policy should be read in conjunction with the University's guidelines and procedures relating to collaborative programmes, available on the 'Programmes' section of the Academic Secretariat website.

1. INTRODUCTION & SCOPE

This document sets out the University's policy for split-site PhD and other Graduate Research Degree arrangements to facilitate current and future activities and to ensure common standards and practice across the University. The normal expectation is that candidates registered for research degree programmes which lead to a UCD award will be in attendance at UCD throughout their programme. However, a variety of reasons may cause candidates registered for research degrees in UCD on either a full-time or part-time basis to spend a semester or more off-site, such as undertaking research and taught modules at another institution or for personal circumstances.

Purpose:

This policy aims to address the needs of UCD students registered to PhD and other Graduate Research Degree programmes who have, as part of their study plans undertaken to conduct significant elements of their research programme away from the University. It is also intended that this policy will safeguard the quality and academic standards of the University's research degree programmes.

The policy only refers to split-site arrangements for PhD or research degrees leading to a UCD award.

What's not covered by this policy:

- Students undertaking short-term fieldwork (i.e. less than one semester) or visits outside of the University as part of their research programme.
- Individual student arrangements. All individual collaborative student arrangements require Graduate School Board approval, via School Executive Committees or equivalent committees. Detailed arrangements for these will be included in College guidelines. In each case a student study plan (a component of the Research and Professional Development Plan - RPDP) should be presented to the Graduate School Board as part of the approval documentation. In such cases, arrangements should ensure an experience broadly compatible with that of a student based entirely at UCD.
- Arrangements for candidates registered for research degrees at other institutions who spend a substantial period of time at UCD.
- Inter-Institutional Degree Programmes, where a PhD Degree is awarded jointly between UCD and one or more other institutions. Inter-Institutional Degree programmes and the process and procedures regarding the establishment and management of these, are part of a broader university strategic objective and are addressed via documentation available on the 'Programmes' section of the Academic Secretariat website.



2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

This policy establishes a university-wide set of standards and general principles to be applied to all Split-Site PhD and other Graduate Research Programme arrangements:

- Split-site activities undertaken by candidates for research degrees will be facilitated, where deemed justified and appropriate, in accordance with the *Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*, with a view to promoting both the increased mobility of candidates for research degrees and the development of strong inter-institutional relationships.
- All institutional split-site PhD partnerships require formal approval and a written agreement which may take the form of a Memorandum of Understanding.
- The quality and academic standards of the University's research degree programmes will be maintained; split-site arrangements will result in no reduction in academic rigour.
- The *Academic Regulations*, including the *Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*, and the Codes of Good Practice, apply to all candidates registered for research degrees at UCD undertaking split-site activities.
- Split-site arrangements normally require advance agreement between UCD and collaborating institutions with regard to ownership of intellectual property. All research results will be handled in accordance with the *UCD Policy on Intellectual Property and Procedures (2006)*.¹

3. PARTNERSHIPS

Candidates for research degrees may not undertake split-site activities in the absence of any formal links with another institution. Such students will rely entirely on their School for meeting their supervision and training requirements.

Split-site arrangements may take place within the context of formal bi-lateral or multi-lateral collaborative arrangements with other institutions, to cater for larger number of students on a continuing basis. Such formal collaborative arrangements may take the form of inter-institutional Thematic Doctoral Programmes, recognised by the University Graduate Programmes Board, in accordance with *Academic Regulation 15.4* of the *Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Both informal and formal inter-institutional collaborative partnerships offer opportunities for Schools and collaborating Institutes to co-operate in meeting their respective students' supervision, mentoring and training requirements.

Schools should consult the 'Programmes' section of the Academic Secretariat website, College Graduate School Director and the International Office (if appropriate), prior to entering into any partnership agreements with other institutions.

4. APPROVAL OF SPLIT-SITE ARRANGEMENTS

The prior approval of the College Graduate School Board must be sought if more than one semester is to be spent off-site, in accordance with *Academic Regulation 17.8* of the *Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Applications for approval of split-site arrangements must be accompanied by the recommendation of the Head of School. All split-site arrangements are subject to an overall split-site agreement drawn up between UCD and the other institution/site. Such an agreement should specify the host institutions' obligations to students and to UCD in relation to health and safety legislation.

¹ available at <http://www.ucd.ie/nova/technologytransferresearchers/ucdippolicy/>



Candidates for research degrees should normally apply for permission to undertake split-site research at the outset (application stage), justifying their reasons for opting for split-site arrangements. However, the need for split-site arrangements may not emerge until research is underway. For instance, the Principal Supervisor's resignation from the staff of the University to move to another institution may necessitate split-site arrangements. In these cases, the candidate should normally apply for permission as soon as possible, well in advance of commencing split-site arrangements, justifying their rationale for opting for split-site arrangements.

Schools and College Graduate School Boards may consider the following, with regard to individual candidates' ability to undertake research off-site:

- Supervisor(s) recommendations regarding the candidate's ability to self-manage and to meet their research and professional development goals while off-site.
- Evidence that the candidate will have access to the facilities and resources required to undertake their research while off-site.
- Evidence that the candidate will have access to suitable supervisory arrangements and that resources will be made available for this purpose, if required.

Schools and College Graduate School Boards may consider the following, with regard to establishing inter-institutional partnership arrangements, which may be made on a case-by-case basis or by establishing formal mechanisms for inter-institutional mobility:

- Rationale for the link with external institutions, specifically:
 - the reputation and standing of the partner institution.
 - the facilities and resources to be made available to UCD research students.
 - the length and nature of the arrangement, e.g. once-off arrangements for individual students or arrangements for a significant cohort of students on a continuing basis.
- Opportunities for the development of formal relationships with other institutions.
- Whether the proposed arrangement supports the UCD Strategic Plan, in terms of research and teaching and learning.

5. PERIODS OF ATTENDANCE AT UCD

Requirements for attendance at UCD will be determined on a case-by-case basis and agreed by the relevant Schools. Those requirements will be indicated to the candidate at the time of acceptance for the degree. In deciding on requirements, Schools will have regard to the responsibilities of the candidate's supervisor(s) in UCD, and of the School for the supervision, support and training of the candidate set out in the *Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Degree Students*.² Schools will have discretion in deciding how best to meet these responsibilities. Options may include attendance at UCD, electronic methods e.g., e-mail or video conference, attendance at some other location agreed with the candidate or visits by appropriate staff of the School in question to the candidate's site.

The timing and length of periods of attendance at UCD will be decided by the individual School, following discussion between the candidate and the supervisor, and will be set out in a written agreement signed by the student and supervisor (and / or Thematic Programme Co-ordinator). Any changes to the agreed schedule of visits must be agreed with the candidate. Candidates who wish to register for research degrees in UCD and to avail of split-site arrangements will normally be required to make an initial visit to UCD on first registration in order to attend introductory course(s) and / or subject-specific skills training and to meet

² available at <http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/pol.htm>



with their Principal Supervisor and Doctoral Studies Panel, to facilitate the drafting and reviewing of their Research and Professional Development Plan (RPDP).

6. ARRANGEMENTS FOR RESEARCH SUPERVISION, MENTORSHIP, ASSESSMENT AND TRAINING

Arrangements for research provision will be made in accordance with Section 17 of the *Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. Existing and new supervisors appointed under split-site arrangements who are not permanent members of the academic staff of the University must be approved by the University Graduate Programmes Board to act as supervisors and their names entered on the Register of Approved Adjunct and Visiting Supervisors, in accordance with *Academic Regulation 17.2* and the *Procedures for the Approval of Adjunct and Visiting Academic Staff as Principal Supervisors*.³

Schools will need to pay particular attention to the demands placed on candidates while not in attendance at UCD, and ensure that adequate supervision and support are available. Schools will determine appropriate arrangements for supervision, including nature and frequency of contact, consistent with the provisions of the *Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Degree Students*.

UCD has established mechanisms and processes for mentorship and assessment, involving Doctoral Studies Panels and Assessment Panels. In the case of split-site research degrees, the expectation is that at least one member of each of these panels should be a permanent member of the academic staff of the University.

Schools will need to ensure that candidates are able to receive all necessary research skills and generic / transferable skills training at the appropriate time. It is expected, as described above, that the initial training needs analysis, utilising the Research and Professional Development Plan (RPDP), will take place during an initial visit to UCD at the outset of the research degree programme. Subsequent training needs analyses will be conducted either face-to-face or by electronic means, depending on the schedule of visits to UCD agreed with the student.

7. OFF-SITE SUPERVISORY VISITS

It is expected that the supervision of split-site research programmes meets the University's requirements and standards as outlined in the *Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Degree Students*. Schools are encouraged, where possible, to visit students off-site to provide supervision, support and training, particularly in the absence of formal collaborative agreements with other institutions.

Research projects of a split-site nature may require the advance negotiation of funding arrangements to cover the costs of any off-site supervisory visits and this requirement should be indicated to the candidate and sponsor at the offer stage. It is the responsibility of the School to ensure that proper funding arrangements are in place to cover any off-site supervisory visits required, prior to granting final agreement to such split-site arrangements.

8. ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE ACADEMIC FACILITIES

Schools will need to be satisfied that candidates will have adequate access to appropriate academic facilities at all times. Schools will need to exercise discretion in deciding what constitutes adequate access and appropriate academic facilities for this purpose, taking into account the discipline, research topic and student's circumstances.

³ Available at http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/adjunct_visiting.doc



Typically, access will require students to be formally associated with a local institution providing academic facilities, e.g. a university or research centre. Where a formal inter-institutional collaborative agreement does not exist, candidates will normally need to provide a letter from an appropriate person in authority at the local institution, confirming the right of access to facilities appropriate to their research project. Schools will work with students to ensure that adequate access to appropriate facilities is available to them for their research project.

Review

It is recommended that this policy document be reviewed every three years from its date of approval at Academic Council.

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Version History

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1.0	26/01/07	First draft (circulated to policy working group prior to first meeting)	Alan Baird
1.1	09/03/07	Revision of document based on first meeting of the policy working group on 06/02/07 (circulated to policy working group for comment by e-mail)	Lynn Foster & Vanda Clayton
1.2	16/04/07	Revision of document based on comments received by e-mail (circulated to policy working group for further comment by e-mail)	Lynn Foster & Vanda Clayton
1.3	18/04/07	Revision of document based on comment received by e-mail regarding intellectual property and input from Nova UCD (circulated to UGPB for discussion)	Lynn Foster & Vanda Clayton
1.4	02/05/07	Revision of document based on UGPB discussion (circulated to policy working group for noting and UGPB for approval)	Lynn Foster
1.5	15/04/11	Revision of document based on minor amendments to <i>Academic Regulations</i>	Lynn Foster

Consultation and Approvals Plan



Committee/Group	Date		Version	Action	Decision
	Meeting	Circulation			
Policy Working Group	06/02/07	26/01/07	1.0		
Nova UCD		17/04/07	1.2	Amended IP clause	
Edel Kirley, Corporate and Legal Affairs		18/04/07	1.3	Approved new IP clause	
UGPB	26/04/07	18/04/07	1.3	For discussion	
ACEC	06/06/07	01/06/07	1.4	For approval	Approved
UGPB	14/04/11	07/04/11	1.5	For recommendation	Recommended
AC	28/04/11	21/04/11	1.5	For approval	Amended Policy Approved

