



OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE SERVICES
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POLICY

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Title: Conjoint Degrees

Policy Statement

The University of Vermont and State Agricultural College (UVM) may award Conjoint Doctoral Degrees as part of an existing approved Ph.D. graduate program. Each instance of such a degree will be governed by the provisions of a Conjoint Arrangement, which must conform to the regulations set forth in this policy.

Reason for the Policy

Joint supervision by faculty members at two universities of graduate students pursuing Ph.D. degrees promotes scientific collaboration between the two universities, leverages resources to conduct research and scholarly work, promotes student mobility, and has the potential to significantly improve the student's graduate training environment. Scholarly work performed at another institution is routinely applied toward a candidate's degree program in the form of transfer credit. Where the scholarly work of the student performed at two institutions is more substantial (particularly with respect to dissertation research), and part of an ongoing research and scholarly collaboration between the two institutions, awarding of a Conjoint Degree becomes appropriate (also referred to as "joint degrees", or, if specifically with a French university, as a "Cotutelle").

A Conjoint Degree awarded by UVM attests that the student has completed all the degree requirements for a Ph.D. in an existing UVM graduate program while acknowledging that a substantial portion occurred in the context of dual supervision. In this regard, Conjoint Degrees are distinct from "dual degrees", which are two separate degrees, one frequently a professional degree, awarded for completion of a set course of study with coursework applied toward both degrees (e.g., a J.D./M.B.A. or an M.D./Ph.D).

The research work performed at a Partner Institution to be applied toward a Conjoint Doctoral Degree needs to be conducted under the provisions of an appropriate Conjoint Arrangement. This Conjoint Degrees Policy establishes the requirements necessary for each individual Conjoint Arrangement under which a student may be awarded a Conjoint Degree, including the requirement that a UVM diploma for a Ph.D. degree awarded as a Conjoint Degree will include mention of the conjoint nature of the degree.

Applicability of the Policy

This policy applies to all Conjoint Doctoral Degrees and Conjoint Arrangements.

Definitions

Conjoint Arrangement: means an arrangement between the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College and a Partner Institution for the joint administration and award of a doctoral degree, under which the candidate is enrolled, supervised, and examined by both institutions.

Conjoint Doctoral Degree: means a doctoral degree that is jointly administered and awarded by the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College and a Partner Institution under a Conjoint Arrangement.

Partner Institution: means a foreign University or other educational institution with the power to confer degrees.

Procedures

1. The University of Vermont and State Agricultural College will enter Conjoint Arrangements only where:
 - a. The Conjoint Arrangement provides enhanced opportunities for existing, ongoing, or developing research collaborations between the two institutions and the academic supervisors involved; and
 - b. There are strong academic reasons for completing a doctoral degree at both institutions and the Conjoint Arrangement will provide a significantly improved graduate training environment for candidates.
2. All Conjoint Arrangements must be evidenced in writing by a formal agreement:
 - a. That typically includes a Memorandum of Understanding that
 - i. Establishes the relationship between UVM and the Partner Institution;
 - ii. Records the parties' desire to enter Conjoint Arrangements; and
 - iii. Lists any admission prerequisites or selection criteria that potential candidates must meet; and
 - b. That must include a candidate-specific agreement for each Conjoint Arrangement that the parties elect to enter which contains the details and terms and conditions in respect of the Conjoint Arrangement for that candidate.
3. The Graduate College is responsible for determining the terms and conditions of the agreements referred to in 2, provided that the exercise of any and all obligations assumed by UVM under a Conjoint Arrangement complies with all applicable UVM regulations and policies.
4. The Graduate College will make available to potential candidates information about
 - a. The Partner Institutions with which UVM has a Conjoint Doctoral Degree relationship;
 - b. The process for applying for enrollment in a Conjoint Doctoral Degree; and
 - c. The specific admission prerequisites and selection criteria in relation to each Partner Institution.

5. Students successfully completing all requirements under the terms and conditions of a Conjoint Arrangement will be awarded a Ph.D. degree from the University of Vermont and both the UVM transcript and UVM diploma will include explicit mention of the conjoint nature of the degree. If a student does not complete all requirements under the Conjoint Arrangement, then UVM and the Partner Institution will consult to determine whether the student may be eligible to receive a degree from one (but not both) of the two institutions based on having met all of that institution's degree requirements. This consultation will in particular consider the issue of any possible transfer credit to be allowed.

Additional Procedures

- Candidates for Conjoint Doctoral Degrees must satisfy the requirements for admission to an existing UVM Ph.D. program. Candidates should submit an application for admission in the usual manner, except that normal application deadlines may be waived and the application may be considered at the same time the Conjoint Arrangement is being considered.
- For students who are already matriculated in a UVM Ph.D. program, a Conjoint Arrangement for doctoral supervision should be negotiated and established prior to the commencement of dissertation research.
- In all cases, an agreement may be negotiated after dissertation research has commenced but only under exceptional circumstances. A candidate who has already completed 25% of their dissertation research may not enter into a Conjoint Arrangement.
- Each Conjoint Arrangement (where the arrangement is cotutelle, French government regulations require the signing of a cotutelle "convention") must either include or reference a formal memorandum of understanding at an institutional level signed by the respective University Presidents or their designees, to ensure that both institutions are committed to a shared responsibility for supervision and to provide security for candidates.
- Each Conjoint Arrangement must include a candidate-specific agreement which contains the details and terms for that candidate. Candidate-specific agreements will be approved at the level of the Dean of the Graduate College. In particular, additional candidate-specific agreements where there already exists an institutional agreement signed by the University President need only be approved by the Dean of the Graduate College.
- The institutional memorandum of understanding and the candidate-specific agreement should address all of the items on the Conjoint Agreement Checklist (attached) to ensure that the proposed arrangement meets all UVM degree requirements. This includes consideration of the compatibility of the doctoral degree regulations of the two institutions. Where incompatibilities exist, these need to be discussed and resolved, and the Conjoint Agreement should explicitly include the resolution reached as to how each institution's rules can be met. Any variation from Graduate College rules and procedures governing UVM degrees must be documented. A document entitled Key Features of UVM Ph.D. Degree Requirements (attached) has been developed to assist in the compatibility assessment.
- A Conjoint Agreement Checklist and a draft Conjoint Arrangement should be forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate College for review by the Graduate College Executive Committee and legal counsel. The Executive Committee will review the proposal and make a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate College, who will be responsible for obtaining requisite UVM signatures.

Contacts

Questions concerning the daily operational interpretation of this policy should be directed to the following (in accordance with the policy elaboration and procedures):	
Title(s)/Department(s):	Contact Information:
Dean of the Graduate College	(802) 656-3160

Forms/Flowcharts/Diagrams

- [Checklist for establishing a Conjoint Arrangement](#)

Related Documents/Policies

- [Key Features of UVM Ph.D. Degree Requirements](#)
- [Sample Conjoint Arrangement, Sample Cotutelle agreement](#)

Regulatory References/Citations

- None

Training/Education

Training will be provided on an as-needed basis as determined by the Approval Authority or the Responsible Official.

About this Policy

Responsible Official:	Provost and Senior Vice President	Approval Authority:	President
Policy Number:	V. 2.11.2	Effective Date:	November 27, 2017
Revision History:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• V. 2.11.1/V. 3.2.5.1 effective December 1, 2007• V. 2.11.2 Reaffirmed May 20, 2022		

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