Principles and Procedures for Split-Site PhDs

1. Introduction
1.1 A split-site PhD is defined as a PhD which leads to a University of Southampton award and involves students being fully registered as University of Southampton students whilst spending a significant period of their research away from the University, at another approved organisation, which will normally be overseas.

1.2 All split-site PhDs require a formal agreement between the University and the partner organisation(s). The split-site PhD is used to increase collaborative research and develop international partnerships. Split-site PhDs are regarded as Collaborative Provision and are subject to the University's Collaborative Provision Policy.

1.3 It may be appropriate to make individual student arrangements, which permit a student to undertake some of their research at an approved location away from the University, for example for students based in industry. These are not referred to as split-site PhDs as they do not involve institution-to-institution agreements. More information about these types of PhD study are available in the Quality Handbook.

1.4 There are other arrangements which offer mobility to PGR students, including joint degrees, field work or other specific visits away from the University. Whilst these types of arrangements may fall under the University’s Collaborative Provision policy, they should not be seen as split-site PhD.

2. Principles of split-site provision
2.1 There should be a nominated lead academic at the University of Southampton responsible for a particular split-site arrangement. This individual would usually be a member of the supervisory team and would work closely with the International Office. They would, for the purposes of the University’s Collaborative Provision Policy, be referred to as the Academic Link Tutor.

2.2 Split-site PhD arrangements should be made with institutions of good academic standing, which can provide an excellent environment for the University’s research students.

2.3 Split-site PhD arrangements should be reviewed regularly, at least every five years.

2.4 There should be a written agreement for all split-site arrangements, setting out the rights and responsibilities of the student, the University of Southampton, and the partner institution(s).

2.5 All provision should be in line with the Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision.

3. How to approve a split-site PhD
3.1 Split-site PhDs are subject to the University’s usual collaborative approval mechanisms and the University’s Collaborative Provision Policy provides the framework under which split-site PhDs are approved. The approval process is based on the assumption that the Director of Graduate School in the relevant Faculty has been informed and is supportive of a split-site PhD proposal.

3.1.1 Contact the International Office or Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team
International split-site PhD arrangements should be discussed with the International Office, who will be able to give specific guidance on a prospective partner and its educational
system. All arrangements should also be discussed with the Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team.

3.1.2 Due Diligence
Due Diligence should be completed on the partner institution, using the Due Diligence process in the University’s Collaborative Provision Policy.

3.1.3 Site Visit
A visit must be undertaken to a prospective partner institution. The Site Visit Checklist should be used. Above all, the site visit should be used to assure the University that students studying a PhD will continue to work in an environment reflecting the University’s Code of Practice on Research Candidature and the University’s Regulations for the degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy.

3.1.4 Risk Assessment
A risk assessment, using the University’s Risk Assessment Form, should be completed.

3.1.5 Approval of a split-site PhD arrangement
As split-site PhDs are judged to be lower risk arrangements than certain other types of collaborative provision, a Collaboration Approval Panel is not needed. Following a recommendation from the DDAP to proceed with the proposed arrangement, the Academic Link Tutor should submit the following for the Collaborative Provision Subcommittee:

- The completed Due Diligence Form
- A completed Site Visit Checklist
- A Split-Site PhD Proposal Form

Collaborative Provision Subcommittee will consider this information and make a decision about whether or not to recommend approval of the arrangement to AQSC. The Secretary to the subcommittee will send the subcommittee’s recommendation to the secretary of AQSC for approval by AQSC.

3.1.6 Approval of individual students on a split-site PhD arrangement.
Once AQSC has approved a split-site PhD, additional students can be added to the agreement by completion of an Annexe to the agreement (individual doctoral arrangement). These should be approved by the relevant Faculty Programmes Committee.

4. Drafting an Agreement
4.1 A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) should be signed at institutional level by the President and Vice-Chancellor and the partner institution.

4.2 For split-site arrangements involving cohorts of students at an overseas institution.
4.2.1 The MoA will be drafted, based on a template, by the International Office. However, no students will be admitted onto a University of Southampton PhD until an Individual Doctoral Agreement is signed.

4.2.2 After the initial arrangement, individual arrangements by Faculties with the partner institution are then catered for by completion and signature of an Annexe to the MoA, which is incorporated, on signature, into the overarching MoA. This Annexe is an individual doctoral arrangement covering arrangements for the supervision of each individual student.
4.3 Operation

Residence
4.3.1 The University's minimum residence requirement at Southampton for research candidates is 12 months (not necessarily over a continuous time period). Although this is a minimum period, Faculties may feel it is appropriate to make the time spent in Southampton longer. Exact timings for periods spent at Southampton should be agreed at the outset but should normally include:

- A period at the beginning of the degree (to include induction)
- Upgrade/transfer from MPhil to PhD
- Final examination period - including the viva voce exam.

Admissions
4.3.2 All admissions information and other arrangements, including for induction, must be available to students and members of the supervisory team at both Southampton and the partner institution/organisation.

Enrolment
4.3.3 Students should enrol annually with their Faculty in Southampton. Students may also need to 'register' temporarily with the partner institution if this is a requirement by that institution whilst studying away from Southampton.

Fees
4.3.4 Fee arrangements should be established in the agreement. Usually, the following model of fees applies:

- For the time spent at Southampton, the annual full-time fee for international PhD students will apply (attendance in Southampton must be for a minimum of 12 months in total). The fee will be charged pro-rata in any one year.
- For the time spent at the partner institution, the annual fee to be paid to the University of Southampton will be at a reduced rate.

4.3.5 Any fee which may also be payable to the partner institution for the provision of supervisory support and the use of facilities during the period(s) of study away from Southampton would also need to be negotiated with the partner institution. This would be an arrangement between the Faculty, the student, and the partner institution.

5. Research and transferable skills training
5.1 All doctoral students are expected to undergo an academic needs analysis, or equivalent (see the Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision and the Regulations for the Degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy).

5.2 Arrangements for where and when this is to be carried out should be agreed at the outset of the student’s programme and stated in the Individual Student Agreement. Once the student’s research and transferable skills training needs have been identified it should be clearly set out in writing where and when any training will take place (i.e. at Southampton or at the partner institution/organisation), and, if relevant, when it is to be assessed.

6. Supervision arrangements
6.1 Supervision arrangements should be clearly specified. The supervisory team should be based at Southampton, with an additional named contact(s) at the partner institution. Composition of the supervisory team should comply with established criteria as set out in the Regulations for the Degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy, together with the Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision. In addition, consideration must be given to the level of input from the partner institution/organisation and this should be clearly defined at the outset.
6.2 The timing of, and arrangements for, supervisory visit(s) must be agreed at the start of the student’s programme. There should also be regular contact between student and main supervisor (by email, phone, skype etc.) whilst the student is away. It is also expected that the partner institution will provide any additional sources of support to the student if needed.

6.3 Supervisory requirements and the responsibilities of the supervisory team should comply with the Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision, taking into account any special or alternative arrangements which may need to be made in the light of any supervision being provided at the partner institution. It is also important that students are aware of their responsibilities and that any special arrangements are put in place to enable them to carry out these responsibilities as required at the partner institution/organisation.

7. Monitoring student progress and formal reviews
7.1 It is the responsibility of the Faculty, through the supervisory team, to ensure that student progress is monitored and supported and that formal review mechanisms are in place (see the Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision). Arrangements for progress monitoring and formal reviews should be agreed at the outset in writing, in consultation with the partner institution/organisation and with the student, and set out in an Annexe of the Memorandum of Agreement.

7.2 Effective supervision, and good organisation and planning on the part of both the student and members of the supervisory team, are fundamental to the success of a split-site research degree. It is therefore particularly important that informal monitoring and formal progress review meetings are carried out regularly, according to a pre-arranged schedule. Informal supervision meetings and formal review meetings should be fully documented, involving appropriate communication between supervisors as necessary, so that it is clear to all concerned how, when and where any problems or issues arising are to be addressed, and any subsequent actions taken. As with all students, PGR Tracker should be used to record all review meetings.

8. Upgrade from MPhil to PhD
8.1 The upgrade process should take place according to the Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision. The expectation is that this process will take place in Southampton.

9. Examination of the PhD
9.1 It is expected that the student will submit his/her thesis to their Faculty in Southampton and that the viva voce will also take place in Southampton. The student will be required to give notification of intention to submit in the normal way (i.e. no later that two months prior to the date of submission). Examination arrangements and the examination process should be carried out as set out in the Regulations for the Degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy and the Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision.

9.2 The viva voce examination will take place in Southampton and the Faculty should ensure that arrangements are communicated well in advance to all concerned including the partner institution. In particular, sufficient time should be allowed to enable the supervisory contact from the partner institution to make arrangements to attend the viva voce should this be requested by the student.

10. Award
10.1 On successful completion, the research degree will be awarded by the University of Southampton. The student will not receive an award from the partner.

11. Complaints and Appeals
11.1 In accordance with normal practice, students and supervisors should be made aware of the procedures and processes for addressing complaints and appeals. The University of Southampton’s procedures should also be invoked if a complaint or an appeal is made in connection with the student’s period of study at the partner institution.
12. **Renewal**  
12.1 Split-site PhD arrangements should be renewed periodically, and not more than every five years. Renewing a PhD requires the following process:

13. **Informal discussions about the renewal**  
13.1 In the first instance, discuss the need for renewal with the Director of the Faculty Graduate School, and the International Office (if international) and QSAT. If there is support for renewing the agreement, proceed to Due Diligence.

14. **Due Diligence**  
14.1 Due Diligence should be completed on the partner institution.

15. **Site Visit**  
15.1 A visit must usually be undertaken to the partner institution at the point of the renewal. The Site Visit Checklist should be used. Above all, the site visit should be used to assure the University that students studying a PhD are continuing to work in an environment supportive of the University’s Code of Practice on Research Candidature.

16. **Risk Assessment**  
16.1 A risk assessment, using the University’s Risk Assessment Template, should be completed.

17. **Approval of renewal**  
17.1 Renewals of Split-site PhD arrangements should be submitted to the Collaborative Provision subcommittee for consideration. Following a recommendation from the DDAP to proceed with renewing the arrangement, the Academic Link Tutor should prepare the following for the Collaborative Provision Subcommittee of AQSC:

- The completed Due Diligence Form
- A completed Site Visit Checklist
- A Split-Site PhD Proposal Form

17.2 Collaborative Provision Subcommittee will consider this information and make a decision about whether or not to recommend approval to AQSC. The Secretary to the subcommittee will send the subcommittee's recommendation to the secretary of AQSC for approval by AQSC.

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