

# Joint PhD programmes and Co-tutelle de thèse: Examples of good practice and future challenges

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# Background

## Co-tutelle

- Co-tutelle = joint bi-national supervision of a doctoral thesis
- The research for the thesis is conducted in two countries
- One doctoral degree is awarded by two institutions in two different countries

## Joint-PhD programme

- Inter-institutional agreement, which sets the framework for joint PhD projects
- An individual agreement between university and PhD students still needs to be set up (Co-tutelle)

# Examination regulations

- The basis is always an individual cooperation agreement between the institution and the PhD student.
- Clear regulations must be defined (language of thesis and report, where does the defence take place etc.)
- Intercultural differences have to be considered (e.g. regarding grades/final mark/assessment of thesis).
- What does the final certificate look like?

# Why joint programme/Co-tutelle?

- very close (existing) ties between PIs
- different perspectives on the topic
- topic is of relevance in both countries
  
- access to academic career path in both countries
  
- personal „enrichment“ beyond language competences; two higher education systems; two research areas

# Advantages and challenges

## Joint-PhD programme – Advantages

- Framework exists – can be used for a number of PhD students; individual agreements still necessary

## Joint-PhD programme – Challenges

- requires very good fit between departments
- requires institutional/administrative support
- often tied to certain administrative procedures (application procedures/certain deadlines)

# Advantages and challenges

## Co-tutelle de thèse – Advantages

- can be set up on individual request (requires good fit between two chairs/laboratories)
- a plus in the CV
- beneficial for academic career in two countries

## Co-tutelle de thèse – Challenges

- administrative procedure for one person (no institutional infrastructure that can be used)

# Examples from U Konstanz

## Joint-PhD programme

- Konstanz Graduate School Chemical Biology / School of Biological Sciences at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore
  - established in 2013
  - PhD students spend at least one year at the partner institution

### Program Content

- Joint PhD Program between Konstanz Research School Chemical Biology, Germany (KoRS-CB, University of Konstanz, Germany) & School of Biological Sciences (SBS, NTU)
- Intake – January and August
- Scholarship granted for 4 years (*university fees at both universities + stipend*)
- Airfare grant for time spent in Konstanz.
- Thesis: Research project in chemistry / biology / biochemistry as a core curriculum.
- Project carried out in both Singapore & Konstanz.
- International program board (*Konstanz- and NTU Professors*)
- Opportunity to attend training workshops and international scientific conferences.
- Degree awarded by both Nanyang Technological University (NTU) & University of Konstanz.

# Examples from U Konstanz

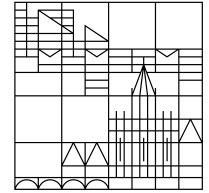
## Co-tutelle de thèse

- approx. 25 cases since 2000 across disciplines (i.e. small numbers)



# Lessons learned

- facts:
  - apply to small groups only
  - require a lot of individual and institutional commitment
- challenges:
  - bi-national dissertations require a very good academic fit between the supervisors
  - enough time for solving legal aspects needs to be taken into account (→ involve the legal department as early as possible)



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