

# THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

## Research Committee

### A Framework for Joint PhD Programmes Leading to Dual Awards

(applicable to students admitted after 1 July 2014)

#### Definition

1. The “Joint PhD Programme” refers to the joint offer of a PhD programme between PolyU and another institution of good standing. Upon satisfactory completion of study, the student will receive two award parchments issued each by PolyU and the partner institution. There will be a footnote printed on the PolyU award parchment stating that the programme is jointly run by PolyU and the partner institution. The partner institution is expected to do the same as far as practicable. As a student will receive two parchments, and in the light of different programme requirements imposed by the partner institution on the joint PhD programme, the student is required to satisfy the programme requirements of both PolyU and the partner institution.
2. This paper outlines the framework to be followed only by PolyU for offering a joint PhD programme and does not intend to describe how the partner institution should regulate the joint programme. There may be reciprocal arrangement in that PolyU students may be allowed to enrol in a joint PhD programme. The joint PhD programme is for students admitted under the category of “beyond the UGC 40% cap” (Note 1), so they do not require the UGC RPg quota.

#### Purpose

3. The purposes of introducing the joint PhD programme include, among other things, strengthening our links with the partner institution, capitalising on both institutions’ research facilities and resources, as well as facilitating research collaboration. It can also help enrich the student’s international study experiences.
4. In view of the above, before entering a joint programme agreement with an institution, PolyU should consider if the above purposes are met. In choosing the collaborating institution, academic complementarity should also be taken into account.

#### Approval

5. The introduction of a joint PhD degree requires the approval of the Senate. Subsequently, decisions on the partner institution will be made by the Senate on a case-by-case basis, upon vetting and recommendation by the Research Committee (RC). An agreement between PolyU and the partner institution must be signed within 36 months of approval granted by Senate. Failing this, approval will be invalidated automatically.
6. Partner institutions should be selected according to the criteria stated in (3) and (4) above and approved by the Faculty/School concerned, and an agreement will be signed between the Presidents of the two universities for each joint PhD programme before applications from students to study the joint PhD programme of the two universities are considered.

#### Student Admission

#### For Incoming Students

7. Admission of students to the joint PhD programme should be approved through the normal admission procedures. Students admitted should satisfy PolyU's minimum entrance requirements and English proficiency requirement, if applicable. However, students of a joint PhD programme from a particular partner institution may be allowed up to the time of confirmation of registration to fulfill PolyU's English proficiency requirement.
8. When applying for admission, the applicant must attach a research proposal and a study plan detailing the periods of study at PolyU and the partner institution. The research proposal and the study plan must be approved by both institutions.

#### For Outgoing Students

9. Students of any disciplines are eligible for application.

#### 10. Stage of Study

Normally, all full-time PhD students within the first half of the normal study period can apply. However, different partner universities may stipulate different requirements on the remaining time of the normal study period. These institution-specific requirements will be stated in the call for applications.

#### 11. Language Requirement

Students must have already completed the Research Language Skills Assessment and passed at least one-third of the language enhancement subjects required.

Students must also have satisfied the language requirement imposed by the partner university.

#### 12. Coursework Requirement

Students must have already completed at least one-third of the coursework requirement in PolyU.

#### **Normal Study Period**

13. Regardless of his/her physical location, the student's registration date will be the date s/he assumes study at either of the two institutions. To cater for the different normative period of study adopted in different institutions, the normal period of study of a particular joint PhD programme is taken as the longer between the normal period of PolyU and that of the partner institution.

#### **Residence Requirement and Source of Funding**

14. Incoming students shall spend no less than 18 months (in blocks of at least 6 months) in PolyU. During the student's stay in Hong Kong, he or she may receive a studentship or certain financial support from the host Department.
15. Outgoing students shall spend no less than 12 months (in blocks of at least 6 months) at the partner university. The research and study activities will be carried out at both PolyU and the partner university. During the student's stay in the partner university, he or she will not receive studentship from PolyU.

#### **Fees, Financial Awards and Student Services**

#### For Incoming Students

16. Students are normally required to pay tuition to PolyU while based at PolyU. During the student's study in Hong Kong, he or she will be required to pay tuition for a six-month period every half-year. The departments concerned have the responsibility to inform both the Research Office (RO) and Finance Office the duration of stay of this group of students. If the period of stay in PolyU is less than six months, the unused portion of the fee paid will be used for subsequent stay in PolyU. A student will be required to pay the sum of the tuition fee in proportion to the exact duration of stay in PolyU, rounding up to one month.
17. The student will also be required to pay other relevant fees, for example, an examination fee should be paid upon thesis submission. Students failing to submit their thesis to the RO by the end of the normal period of study and are continuing their study in Hong Kong must pay a continuation fee for a six-month period every half-year, until submission of thesis. If a student is able to submit his/her thesis to the RO within any six-month period for which they have paid the tuition/continuation fee, any unused whole-month portion of the fee will be refunded in cash, after offsetting the examination fee.
18. Students of the joint PhD programmes are not eligible to apply for postgraduate studentships, research tuition scholarships and conference grants provided by UGC/RGC funds to ensure there is no cross subsidy advocated by the UGC (see note 1 below).
19. Students in the joint PhD programme will be treated the same as regular research students in terms of student support services provided by the University. A student identity card will be issued upon first arrival in Hong Kong.

#### For Outgoing Students

20. Students will be required to pay the tuition fees to PolyU during their studies at the partner university. Unless it is stated otherwise in the agreement between PolyU and the partner university.
21. Students will not be allowed to use Associated Money provided by PolyU during their studies at the partner university.
22. Subject to the approval of the D/SRC, students may use Conference Grant provided by PolyU during their studies at the partner university on condition that they must adhere to the prevailing regulations governing the use of Conference Grant.
23. Students will be provided financial support as follows:
  - a. Irrespective of the number of trips to be taken, travel expenses will be supported based on the actual amount spent on going to and returning from the partner university once only and will be capped at HK\$10,000.
  - b. A monthly allowance of HK\$5,000, capped at HK\$30,000; and
  - c. Financial support on medical coverage and/or settlement arrangements.
24. Accommodation, health insurance and visa will be arranged by individual students.

#### **Regulation and Academic Requirement**

25. Students are required to complete one single piece of research to fulfil the award requirements of both universities and should observe the regulations and guidelines of both universities at all times.
26. Students should fulfil the normal coursework requirement detailed below, which can be taken at either PolyU or the partner institution:

	<b>Coursework requirement *</b>	<b>Details</b>
PhD with Master entry	15 credits	1 credit from HTI6081 + 3 credits from attending seminars + 2 credits from Practicum + 9 credits from other subjects (no more than 6 credits from Guided-study subjects)
PhD with Bachelor entry	22 credits	1 credit from HTI6081 + 4 credits from attending seminars + 2 credits from Practicum + 15 credits from other subjects (no more than 10 credits from Guided-study subjects)

*Note:*

\* *This is the University coursework requirement. The coursework requirements of individual programmes may be different from the University requirements.*

27. Incoming students are required to submit a study plan within the first 6 months of study to both universities.
28. Incoming students also need to apply for confirmation of registration, subject to a formal assessment, preferably during the first half of their normal period of study. Application for extension of confirmation of registration would only be considered on medical grounds. However, as different students (from different partner institutions) may propose different periods of stay at PolyU, the confirmation of registration would be treated with higher flexibility. However, the students' intention must indicate clearly in the study plan on when they plan to apply for confirmation of registration. They also need to submit a progress report as required by PolyU by the stipulated date. By the end of the maximum study period, students must submit a thesis to the RO for assessment. The maximum period of study is taken as the longer between the maximum period of study of PolyU and that of the partner institution.

### **Supervision**

29. A supervisor will be appointed from each of the institutions to supervise the student throughout his/her PhD study. The Chief Supervisor of the partner institution shall be considered as a Co-supervisor of the PhD student when the registration takes effect at PolyU. The PolyU Chief Supervisor is expected to travel to the partner institution on a regular basis to provide adequate supervision.
30. The Faculty Research Committee/School Board will approve the membership of PolyU's supervision team, if applicable.
31. The supervisors of both institutions should, among other things:

- Monitor the student's study progress
- Assess the assessment report submitted for confirmation of registration and the annual progress reports
- Make recommendations concerning the student's suitability to continue the PhD study

### **Medium of Thesis Presentation and Thesis Assessment**

32. A student should only be allowed to submit his/her thesis for assessment with the consent of the supervisors of both institutions.
33. It is preferable to set up one oral examination to assess the student's thesis. If two oral examinations are to be set up, the Chief Supervisors from both universities should be present at both oral examinations. This requirement should also be applied to other interim assessments/examinations to be conducted during the study of the student as far as possible. The means of presence of the Chief Supervisors should be governed by the regulation of the university in which the examination is to be held.
34. In view of the fact that a PolyU PhD degree will be awarded, the thesis assessment should follow PolyU's regulations closely, despite that the student needs to submit a thesis that also needs to fulfil the assessment requirements of the partner institution. The normal medium of thesis presentation and oral defence in PolyU is English.
35. In PolyU, a Board of Examiners (BoE) shall be formed to assess the thesis and conduct the oral examination. The panel should comprise:
  - BoE Chair (from PolyU)
  - Two external examiners (appointed from institutions other than the two institutions concerned).
  - The Chief Supervisors of both universities are required to attend the oral examination as non-voting members of the BoE. The PolyU supervisor should be present in person whereas the supervisor from the partner university may do so either in person or through video facilities (e.g. skype).
  - Other members of the supervisory team may also attend the oral examination as observers.
36. The BoE Chair is responsible for chairing the oral examination. He/she shall also be a gatekeeper ensuring the presentation quality of the thesis before it is sent out for external assessment. The BoE Chair has no voting right.

### **De-registration**

37. If a student is de-registered by or withdraws from either partner institutions for a specific reason, his registration for the joint programme lapses automatically. The student's application for re-admission to either institution should only be considered after one year from the de-registration/withdrawal.

### **Intellectual Property Rights**

38. The intellectual property generated from the student's research should be jointly owned by the two institutions and the associated costs shared equally. Either party can use the

intellectual property for any research and scholarly purposes. Either party can use the intellectual property for commercial purposes (“Commercialisation Party”) provided that it must inform and agree with the other party before any agreement is signed with other third party/parties. The Commercialisation Party is allowed to deduct 15% of the income and benefits generated to cover the commercialisation costs and then share the remaining portion on equal basis with the other party. Any special arrangements with patent protection that is outside the above scope shall be administered in accordance with the policy on Management of Intellectual Property (see note 2 below).

39. The order of authorship should be mutually agreed by both supervisors of the partner institution and PolyU. Where ever possible, the partner institution and PolyU should take turns to claim first institutional authorship of the research papers from each joint PhD programme.

40. Students should abide by the University’s intellectual property policy.

### **Exemption from the Guidelines**

41. Requests for exemption from any of the guidelines given above or requests for inclusion of additional requirements should be forwarded to the RC for consideration to accommodate different circumstances that may arise from signing agreements with different partner institutions.

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#### Note:

1. According to the UGC, “Institutions may enrol additional students beyond the 40% cap if the additional full direct costs incurred (defined as all direct marginal costs incurred arising from the enrolment of the additional student(s), including studentships, and additional costs for student supervision) are met from non-UGC/RGC funds, including higher tuition fees”.
2. Policy on Management of Intellectual Property:
  - (a) Both parties shall agree if patent application is to be lodged with relevant authority. The party that is more convenient to lodge such application shall do so on behalf of both parties. The patent application shall be under the joint name of both parties and all expense shall be equally shared by both parties.
  - (b) If one party chooses not to proceed with patent application in one particular jurisdiction (“Declining Party”) and the other party agrees to assume all costs involved (“Accepting Party”), then the rights of the Declining Party shall be reduced to 25% and the rights of the Accepting Party shall be increased to 75% in that jurisdiction only. The rights of the Declining Party in the other jurisdiction that it has shared costs shall remain the same.
  - (c) If both parties decline to file patent protection and allow the researchers to personally bear the costs for such patent application, then the share of commercial benefits shall be 34% to both parties, 66% to the researchers. Both institutions shall equally share the 34% portion of the commercial benefits generated. Each party shall share its portion of the benefit with its own researchers only in accordance with its corporate policy.

(Updated in June 2016)