

Higher Degree by Research - Collaborative Course Policy

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') provides training, education, and research that matters. We aim to enhance our research capacity and invest in the higher degree by research (HDR) student experience.

(2) Collaborative HDR courses, such as joint or dual-award courses and cotutelle arrangements, enhance the HDR candidate's skills, progress, and experience by providing access to the resources, standing, and capabilities of two higher education institutions. Collaborative HDR courses also facilitate collaboration between the University and other institutions.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This policy outlines University objectives regarding collaborative research with other institutions and the process the University applies while designing and implementing a collaborative HDR course.

(4) This policy sets out the principles that underlie agreements and stipulates the minimum requirements for any such agreements. Specific arrangements for individual candidates are detailed in the relevant agreement.

Section 3 - Scope

(5) This policy applies to:

- a. collaborative HDR course agreements the University undertakes or is preparing to undertake with other organisations, including other universities and research institutions;
- b. HDR candidates undertaking a collaborative HDR course; and
- c. employees of the University involved in arranging and managing collaborative HDR courses.

Section 4 - Policy

(6) Collaborative HDR courses facilitate collaborations with other research institutions. These collaborations:

- a. facilitate the exchange of knowledge, innovations, and perspectives—and thus enhance the skills, insights, and practices of HDR candidates and other researchers;
- b. diminish the duplication of resources and operations across institutions, improving the efficiency of research at the University; and
- c. enable HDR candidates and other researchers to develop more extensive networks of collaborators, exposing these individuals to more opportunities in the future.

(7) Agreements for collaborative HDR courses must be managed in accordance with the [Legal Agreements Policy and](#)

[Procedure](#), and, where the agreement is with a foreign institution, the [Foreign Arrangements Procedure](#).

Eligibility

(8) The University can establish collaborative HDR courses with both Australian and international research institutions. However, the University will establish these programs only when:

- a. the partner institution has developed or is establishing a collaborative association with the University;
- b. the partner institution awards postgraduate degrees;
- c. the academic standing of this partner institution is comparable to the academic standing of the University; and
- d. the Collaborative HDR Course Working Party approves the collaborative HDR course.

Establishment of a dual-award HDR course or cotutelle

(9) A dual-award HDR course or cotutelle refers to an arrangement in which:

- a. an HDR candidate receives supervision from one Principal Supervisor at the University and one Principal Supervisor at the partner institution;
- b. the candidate studies for at least 12 months at each institution;
- c. the candidate must fulfill the minimum requirements to receive an HDR award at both the University and partner institution; and
- d. the candidate receives two awards, one from each institution.

(10) A dual-award HDR course is an arrangement between the University and another Australian university. Cotutelle is an arrangement between the University and an international institution.

(11) The candidate will be liable for fees and/or eligible for fee support at their home institution for the duration of their candidature. The candidate will be exempt from fees at the host institution.

(12) To apply for a dual-award HDR course or cotutelle arrangement, the candidate must:

- a. submit a proposal on the dual-award or cotutelle proposal form. The proposal must be signed by the candidate and the principal supervisors of both the home and proposed partner institutions. The proposal must include information on:
 - i. The resources required to support the candidature and research project;
 - ii. Any country-specific information related to admissions, education, progression, and examination practices; and
 - iii. Other matters specified on the form.
- b. apply for admission at the partner institution.

(13) A dual-award HDR course or cotutelle proposal must be submitted within the first 6-12 months of candidature, and no later than the confirmation of candidature at the home institution.

Approving an arrangement

(14) The dual-award or cotutelle proposal will be reviewed by Research and Innovation to ensure the proposal meets the necessary admissions and cotutelle requirements of both institutions. When reviewing the proposal, Research and Innovation will liaise with the student, supervisors, relevant Associate Dean Research, and the international institution.

(15) Any proposal involving a foreign institution must be managed in accordance with the [Foreign Arrangements Procedure](#).

(16) Once a dual-award HDR course or cotutelle agreement has been finalised, the agreement will be submitted for approval to the Collaborative HDR Course Working Party and the appropriate authority at the partner institution.

(17) The Collaborative HDR Course Working Party may approve the agreement if it is satisfied that:

- a. there is an appropriate level of research collaboration, infrastructure support, and financial support between the institutions;
- b. there is evidence that the arrangement will provide academic benefits to the candidate and the University;
- c. there is adequate resourcing at each institution, including the capacity for continuity of supervision; and
- d. where the University is the host institution, the student meets the requirements of the [Higher Degree by Research Policy](#) and the [Higher Degree by Research - Admission and Enrolment Procedure](#) and has the required insurance and financial support.

Minimum requirements for cotutelle arrangements

(18) Dual-award HDR course or cotutelle agreements must be consistent with:

- a. the policies and procedures of the University and the partner institution; and
- b. any existing agreements between the University and the relevant partner institution.

(19) Dual-award HDR course or cotutelle agreements must specify:

- a. the method of research, including the formulation of the research proposal;
- b. when research will be undertaken at each institution;
- c. the details of the two principal supervisors;
- d. the management of milestones to satisfy the requirements of both institutions;
- e. that the thesis will be presented in English, the agreed format of the thesis, and whether there is a requirement to provide an abstract in a language other than English;
- f. a process for examinations that satisfies the requirements of both institutions; and
- g. whether examination will include an oral defence, including where and in which language it will be conducted and whether an observer from the University is required to attend.

(20) The Dean of Graduate Studies may approve variations to the minimum requirements in exceptional circumstances. The Dean of Graduate Studies must communicate in writing to all parties the details of any variations.

Management of cotutelle arrangements

(21) Once a dual-award HDR course or cotutelle arrangement has been approved, it is the candidate's responsibility to arrange admission and enrolment at the host institution and travel, visa, and accommodation requirements.

(22) Where a student whose home institution is Charles Darwin University is involved in a formal review of progress under the [Higher Degree by Research - Progression Procedure](#), the student will not be able to travel to the host institution until the process is completed.

(23) The Dean of Graduate Studies may approve minor variations, including to the supervisory panel and dates of research at each institution.

(24) Variations to an approved dual-award HDR course or cotutelle agreement may only be made with the approval of the Collaborative HDR Course Working Party and the appropriate authority at the partner institution.

(25) Approved variations must be reported to the Associate Dean Research, the University, and the equivalent position at the partner institution.

(26) A candidate who wishes to withdraw from an approved dual-award HDR course or cotutelle agreement and revert to single institution candidature must apply to the Collaborative HDR Course Working Party and the appropriate authority at the partner institution.

Examination and conferral

(27) The examination panel for a dual-award HDR course or cotutelle candidature must:

- a. be appointed in consultation with both institutions;
- b. include at least two people who are independent of both institutions; and
- c. meet the examiner criteria in the [Higher Degree by Research - Preparation, Submission and Examinations Procedure](#).

(28) Examiner reports must be provided in English and may be provided in another language if required under the cotutelle agreement.

(29) Both participating institutions must respect the outcome of the examination.

(30) Following successful examination and subject to the candidate meeting each institution's award requirements, each institution will confer the award on the candidate.

(31) The testamurs will record that the award was made under a dual-award HDR course or cotutelle agreement by including the statement that, "The research project leading to the award of this degree was conducted under a cotutelle arrangement between Charles Darwin University and [partner institution]".

Establishment of a Joint HDR Course

(32) A Joint HDR course refers to an arrangement in which:

- a. the University and a partner institution collaborate to design a HDR program that integrates the resources and capabilities of each organisation;
- b. the University and a partner institution construct an agreement that delineates the minimum requirements that HDR candidates must fulfill to be awarded the degree; and
- c. HDR candidates that fulfill these requirements are awarded one degree that includes the badge of both institutions.

(33) Collaborative HDR courses should accord with all University policies and procedures, unless the Academic Board approve exceptions. Agreements to develop collaborative HDR courses must establish:

- a. procedures concerning admission, enrolment, scholarships, conditions, supervision, submission, examination, conferral, and termination that are specific to this program;
- b. the minimum amount of time that candidates must be located at each institution;
- c. any milestones and training that candidates must complete;
- d. processes for managing problems with candidate progress and supervision;
- e. how the institutions will collaborate to evaluate and to enhance the program over time;
- f. how agreements around intellectual property, data management, research ethics, and other matters will be managed; and
- g. how expenses and funding will be distributed across the institutions.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(34) Non-compliance with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the [Code of Conduct - Employees](#) or the [Code of Conduct - Students](#), as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the [Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025](#) and the [Code of Conduct - Students](#).

(35) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the [Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees](#) and [Complaints Policy - Students](#).

(36) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the [Fraud and Corruption Control Policy](#) and [Whistleblower Reporting \(Improper Conduct\) Procedure](#).

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Steve Rogers Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Community Connection +61 8 89466890
Implementation Officer	Steven Greenland Dean of Graduate Studies
Enquiries Contact	Steven Greenland Dean of Graduate Studies