Duquesne University Guidelines for International Cotutelle Agreements

More and more, research is being undertaken on an international basis in a fast-changing and increasingly globalized world. It is consequently important for doctoral candidates to gain international research experience. Duquesne University particularly values international study and cooperation in research because of its Catholic, Spiritan mission. Making cotutelle agreements possible enhances Duquesne’s international profile and reputation.

Because of the increased interest from faculty and students in cotutelle agreements, Duquesne University has developed these Guidelines. Since each cotutelle agreement is set up by the University for an individual student and partner university, there will need to be separate cotutelle agreements signed for each arrangement. This general policy will provide a framework and context within which individual cotutelle agreements can be established. The policy does not require participation by all academic units. It is left up to individual units to pursue cotutelle to the extent to which it serves their interests and that of their students.

What is a cotutelle?
A cotutelle is a French term and refers to a collaborative agreement between two universities (the home university and the partner university) in different countries. Under such an arrangement, a doctoral student completes the requirements of the Ph.D. program in both the home and partner university, and conducts his/her dissertation research collaboratively, sequentially, and for roughly equal amounts of time in both universities, and is supervised by a faculty member from each of the universities. The dissertation is then examined by a committee whose members are drawn from both institutions. This works particularly well when there is an established and robust research partnership between either the two faculty members or two groups of faculty in the partner universities.

Eligibility for a cotutelle agreement
Full time students who are candidates in a Ph.D. program, are registered as students, and are in good standing may be eligible for a cotutelle agreement. A cotutelle agreement should be initiated jointly by an individual Duquesne student and his or her supervising faculty advisor. Both must consult with the appropriate department chair and/or program director. A formal proposal must be submitted to the Office of the Dean of the appropriate College/School and reviewed by the Office of the Provost prior to signing a formal agreement.

Fulfilling Program Requirements
Students participating in a cotutelle must fulfill the Ph.D. program requirements at both institutions. This will occur through a transfer of credit, where appropriate, where courses taken at the home institution can be applied to the host institution and vice-versa in a manner where the requirements of both institutions can be met within the regular period of study. It is understood that any coursework from the student’s home institution must be completed prior to visiting the host institution. In any case, a cotutelle agreement may not be relied upon to satisfy 25% or more of the requirements for any Ph.D. program degree at Duquesne University.

Requirements of a cotutelle agreement
The following requirements for each cotutelle agreement individually must be addressed in a written agreement, developed by authorized persons at the home university and the partner university and by the individual student:
1) A written summary of the student’s research project which must be signed by the dissertation advisors at both institutions
2) An outline of the anticipated timeline for study at the partner institution
3) A letter from academic advisors at both institutions indicating their agreement to supervise the doctoral candidate under the cotutelle
4) Details on how the student will fund his/her studies abroad
5) Specification of the language(s) of instruction to be used (typically including English)
6) A statement regarding intellectual property if deemed necessary
7) A provision that permits the Ph.D. candidate, the home institution or the partner institution to opt out of the cotutelle agreement with appropriate notice.

The agreement must be approved and signed by:
1) The department chair
2) The appropriate academic Dean at Duquesne
3) The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
4) The appropriate counterparts to (1), (2) and (3) and any other required signatories at the partner institution
5) The student

(Abstracted with permission from Carleton University, Canada)

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