

# SETTING UP COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

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In line with the University's Global Engagement Strategy, we are engaging in an increasing number of requests to set up collaborative arrangements with other academic institutions. These primarily relate to PhD study, although could, in principle, relate to Professional Doctorate or Research Masters study. The purpose of this document is to outline the different types of arrangement, and the process which should be followed if you are interested in setting one up.

There are three main types of arrangement:

- Joint supervision
- Joint awards
- Double or dual awards

## Joint Supervision

Many collaborative arrangements simply involve a student who is registered solely at Reading being supervised by a member of staff from another institution, in addition to having one or more Reading supervisors. This type of arrangement is ideally suited to when the collaboration relates to an individual student, as it is by far the easiest to put in place. It is also a useful first step which can be used to 'try out' a collaborative relationship, before moving on to thinking about a setting up a joint or double award for future students.

Some joint supervision arrangements are likely to stem from collaborations between one institution (or more likely a Department or unit within an institution) and one or more members of staff in a Reading Department. In such cases, it is necessary for a simple Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to be put in place to cover such areas as confidentiality, intellectual property, data protection, etc, as well as practical aspects of the joint supervisory arrangement. Reading Legal Services has produced a template MOA document that should be used where possible. If a partner institution wants to base the agreement on their own standard MOA, then this would need to be approved by our Legal Services department before being signed.

In addition to the above type of arrangement, it is sometimes necessary for an external supervisor to be appointed for a particular student, for example because an existing supervisor has left Reading and there is no other suitable person available from within the institution, or because the project is being funded by an external organisation that wants to be involved in the supervision. In these cases, provided the external supervisor is based in the UK, it is not necessary for a formal MOA to be drawn up and signed. However, a letter of agreement would need to be entered into between the proposed external supervisor and the University, and our Legal Services Department has produced a template letter that should be used for this purpose. Once the template has been completed, it needs to be signed off by the Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies.

## Joint awards and Double awards

Although the majority of collaborative arrangements are of the above nature, we are seeing an increasing number of requests to enter into collaborative agreements where two or more partners feel that there would be a strategic benefit in setting up a Joint award or Double awards.

## **Joint awards**

In the case of joint awards, the student receives a single award that is conferred by more than one institution. Joint awards can be made in collaboration with UK and / or overseas partners.

Arrangements for joint awards may, exceptionally, be made on an individual student basis, provided there is a convincing strategic case for doing this, but would more frequently relate to an agreement where the intention is for this to apply to a number of students over the coming years. Given the length of time it takes to set up a joint award, it is not possible to do this for students who have already enrolled on the programme.

Joint awards typically involve students spending an agreed amount of time at each partner institution. In aggregate, students should spend at least one-third of their programme registered (in the sense of falling under our jurisdiction) at Reading in order to be eligible for a Joint award. Students registered for such awards would be jointly supervised by staff at each partner institution. Responsibilities for Quality Assurance would rest with both institutions. Other aspects relating to intellectual property, data protection, facilities, training, the applicable rules and regulations that would apply to the students, examinations, degree certificate, graduation, and fees would be agreed by discussion between partners, and set out in the Memorandum of Agreement (see below).

## **Double awards**

In the case of double awards, the student receives a separate award from each participating institution. Double awards are normally only awarded in collaboration with overseas partners. The motivation for having a double as opposed to a joint award usually comes from the partner institution, particularly where they are keen to build up their own higher degree awarding experience. Therefore, requests for double awards will normally relate to agreements where the intention is for there to be a number of students over the coming years.

As with Joint awards, students will normally be spending an agreed amount of time at each partner institution and, in aggregate, the student should spend at least one-third of their programme registered at Reading (in the sense of falling under our jurisdiction) in order to be eligible for a double award. They would also be jointly supervised by staff at each partner institution. Responsibilities for Quality Assurance would rest separately with the two institutions. An MOA would need to be put in place between the two institutions dealing with matters such as quality assurance, intellectual property, data protection, facilities, training, the applicable rules and regulations that would apply to the student, examinations, degree certificate and fees.

# **Approval process for Joint or Double awards**

## **Collaborations with overseas partners**

Staff who are interested in setting up joint or double awards that relate to collaborations with one or more overseas partners:

- Should complete the attached Expression of Interest form, signed by the lead academic and Head of School, and send this to the Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies at an early stage in their discussions.
- Provided the Dean is convinced that there is a good academic case for setting up the award, she will forward the completed form to the International Partnerships Team.
- It is likely that the Partnerships team will need to carry out some level of due diligence work which would look into the standing of the proposed partner institution/s, the quality of the

teaching / supervision, the rules and regulations of the institution/s applicable to the student, admissions and examinations. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) may need to be put in place at this stage.

- Provided there are no significant issues highlighted, an MOA would then need to be put in place and approved by our Legal Services Department. The University's Legal Services team has put together a template agreement for both joint and double awards. This agreement covers all the legal requirements and practical considerations that need to be agreed between the University of Reading and the partner institution, and should be used wherever possible. The agreement covers all future students who register for a joint award or double award, with separate annexes setting out the specific arrangements for each individual student. Any amendments to the template agreement need to be approved by our Legal Services Department. If a partner institution insists on using their own standard MOA, this would also need to be approved by our Legal Services Department.
- Final agreements between the University and partner HEIs need to be signed off at Pro-Vice Chancellor level.
- The Dean of PGR Studies needs to be kept updated in terms of progress through these stages, and should be copied in to any email that is sent to the PVC's Office at the final stage.

### **Collaborations with UK partners**

Staff who are interested in setting up joint awards that relate to collaborations solely with UK partners:

- Should complete the attached Expression of Interest form, signed by the lead academic and Head of School, and send this to the Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies (again, at an early stage in their discussions), who will assess whether there is a sufficiently strong academic case for setting up the award.
- Provided there is a sufficiently good case, an MOA would then need to be put in place and approved by our Legal Services Department. Again, it is highly preferable to use the MOA put together by our Legal Services Department rather than using the Partner's standard MOA. This agreement covers all the legal requirements and practical considerations that need to be agreed between the University of Reading and the partner institution, and should be used wherever possible. The agreement covers all future students who register for a joint award or double award, with separate annexes setting out the specific arrangements for each individual student. Any amendments to the template agreement need to be approved by our Legal Services Department. If a partner institution insists on using their own standard MOA, this would also need to be approved by our Legal Services Department.
- Final agreements between the University and partner HEIs need to be signed off at Pro-Vice Chancellor level.
- The Dean of PGR Studies needs to be kept updated in terms of progress through these stages, and should be copied in to any email that is sent to the PVC's Office at the final stage.

## **Partnerships associated with research grants / non-academic partners**

Very occasionally a joint or double award may need to be set up as part of an externally funded research collaboration. These may also involve one or more external partners. Where this is the case, the lead academic at Reading should complete the attached Expression of Interest Form, signed by the lead academic and Head of School, and send it to the Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies for information. However, the primary support office will be the Contracts team in RES, who will liaise as necessary with the University's Legal Services Department. It is important that the lead academic contacts RES at an early stage in his or her negotiations with external partners.

## Contact Details

*Graduate School*

Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies : [a.c.williams@reading.ac.uk](mailto:a.c.williams@reading.ac.uk)

Director of Graduate School Services : [elena.bedisti@reading.ac.uk](mailto:elena.bedisti@reading.ac.uk)

*Partnerships Office*

Ashley Burke: [partnerships@reading.ac.uk](mailto:partnerships@reading.ac.uk)

*Legal Services*

[legalservices@reading.ac.uk](mailto:legalservices@reading.ac.uk)

*Research and Enterprise Services (RES)*

Contact relevant School contract manager in Enterprise Services. For details see:

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/research-services/research-and-enterprise-services-contacts?#EnterpriseServices>

Professor Adrian Williams,

Dean of PGR Studies

January 2023

## Expression of Interest Form

Your Details	
Name	
Job title	
School / Department	
Email	
Telephone	
Proposed Partner Details	
Academic Unit	
Institution	
Address	
Name of key contact	
Job Title	
Email	
Nature of collaboration <i>(select one of the following)</i>	
Joint Award	
Double Award	
Uncertain which at this stage	

Brief outline of proposed collaboration, including any previous experience of working with proposed partner	
Academic / strategic case for proposed partnership	
Proposed PGR programme <i>(please select one)</i>	
PhD	
Professional Doctorate (if so, which)	
Masters by Research (if so, which)	
Anticipated number of students entering each year	
Proposed start date and length of collaboration	
Proposed Study arrangements, <i>including supervision, training, split-site registration, etc.</i>	



<p>Proposed financial arrangements</p> <p><i>Including any set up costs, student fees, stipends, research expenses, travel costs, etc.</i></p>	
<p>Signatures</p> <p>Lead Academic</p> <p>Head of School</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

Please send completed form to Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies, Professor Adrian Williams [a.c.williams@reading.ac.uk](mailto:a.c.williams@reading.ac.uk) and copied to Head of Graduate School Services, Dr Elena Bedisti [elena.bedisti@reading.ac.uk](mailto:elena.bedisti@reading.ac.uk)