



## Guidelines for PhD double degrees

In 2010 an addition to the ministerial order on PhD education gave Danish universities the option of awarding a double degree to PhD students, who are enrolled at a foreign university and have completed a study visit at the Danish university. After the awarding of a PhD degree from the home university the PhD student can thus be awarded a second degree from the Danish university.

In the order on PhD education (no. 18, 2008 and no. 577, 2010) the option is described as below:

§ 2, section 1: "The university may award the PhD degree within fields within which the university carries out research and has set up a PhD school independently or in cooperation with other universities."

§ 2, section 2 (NEW): "The university may, under the same conditions as in section 1, award the PhD degree to students, who have completed a study visit at the university, if the study visit happens after agreement with one or more foreign universities and as part of a mutually obligating international research and education collaboration with the university or universities in question."

§ 15, section 1: "The thesis can only be accepted for assessment if the PhD programme is completed satisfactorily [...]."

§ 15, section 3 (NEW): "A thesis by a student from a foreign university can be accepted for assessment without the author having completed a Danish PhD programme, if the student has completed a study visit at a Danish University, cf. § 2, section 2, and if the university assesses that the author has in other ways gained comparable qualifications."<sup>1</sup>

The following conditions must thus be met before a double degree can be awarded:

1. The student must be enrolled at a foreign university with which the Danish university collaborates.
2. The student must have completed a study visit at the Danish university as part of this collaboration.
3. The foreign PhD programme must be at least comparable to the Danish PhD programme in terms of gained qualifications.

## Criteria for entering into an agreement on a double degree

The award of a double degree can only be with reference to a double degree agreement. The agreement is entered into by Aarhus University, Faculty of Health (HE) represented by a co-supervisor from HE and the relevant head of department, the foreign university represented by the main supervisor and the relevant head of department (or similar), and the PhD student in question. The agreement does not come into effect before after approval by the head of the graduate school at HE.

1. A double degree can only be awarded pursuant to a signed prior agreement on the awarding of a double degree.
2. A double degree agreement must be with reference to an existing collaboration agreement between Aarhus University and the foreign university. This collaboration agreement must be on university, faculty, or department level.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that only the Danish version of the text have legal validity. Translations of the new sections are furthermore not official.



3. There must be a valid academic reason for entering into an agreement leading to a double degree.
4. The PhD programme at the foreign university must be at least on an academic level comparable to a Danish PhD programme. It is recognized, that universities with lesser ranking can have excellent local academic environments.
5. The PhD student must stay at least 6 months at HE, and the stay – or study visit – must be integral to the PhD project.
6. When entering into the agreement the PhD student must be enrolled at a foreign university. The foreign university is home to the PhD student, the PhD programme and the PhD project, and the PhD student must live up to rules and regulations governing PhD education at the foreign university ('home university'). If it is a condition of the home university that an agreement must be entered into before enrolment can take place, the agreement will be on the condition of enrolment.
7. As the PhD student is not enrolled at HE, no study fees or other fees are charged by the graduate school at HE. The PhD student will be a guest PhD student at HE ('guest university') and will have access to PhD courses etc. equal to PhD students enrolled at HE during the time of the study visit. The PhD student can not be enrolled at HE under a double degree agreement, as this would mean the PhD student would have to meet the usual formal requirements for a Danish PhD education.
8. A co-supervisor at HE must be appointed. The co-supervisor functions during the PhD student's study visit at HE as the primary contact person. If the co-supervisor becomes unavailable HE appoints another equally competent co-supervisor.
9. A main supervisor at the home university must be appointed. If the main supervisor becomes unavailable the home university must appoint another equally competent main supervisor.
10. There must be mutual agreement on supervisor roles, the course of the PhD programme, and IPR aspects.
11. The PhD student's educational background must be at least a Master's degree or similar and be considered adequate and relevant in relation to the PhD project in question.
12. The thesis is accepted for assessment at both the home university and HE:
  - The thesis is handed in at the home university.
  - A common assessment committee consisting of at least 3 well renowned scientists within the field is appointed by the home university. It must be confirmed that a HE employee (assistant professor or professor) with qualifications relevant to the PhD project, but not the co-supervisor, will be part of the assessment committee. At HE the assessment committee is approved by the PhD Committee.
  - The assessment committee recommends the thesis to be accepted for a thesis defence (viva), which should be open to the public and held at the home university. It must be confirmed that the HE employee in the assessment committee will be present. At HE the recommendation for a thesis defence is approved by the head of the graduate school.



- After the defence and awarding of a PhD degree by the home university, a Danish PhD degree is awarded by the HE Academic Council.
13. There must be a mutual agreement on the content and academic level of the thesis. It should meet the international standards for a thesis in the field of health science, and publications and manuscripts should be in concordance with the Vancouver requirements.
  14. The financial conditions concerning the study visit must be considered. This includes salary, travel and living expenses, as well as project related expenses during the visit. The PhD student will typically be employed at the home university or in other ways financed from home. In this case it should be considered whether a supplementary grant during the time of the study visit is necessary and/or reasonable, e.g. in relation to requirements for residence permits etc. If salaried employment at HE during the study visit has been agreed upon, the employment category must be stated.
  15. The financial conditions concerning co-supervision and assessment must be considered. This includes co-supervisor's travel and living expenses, if applicable, and expenses incurred in connection with the HE employee's participation in the committee work, including the thesis defence.

March 8, 2012

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