

Guidelines on Joint Supervision of Research Postgraduate Students With Non-academic Institutions

1. *Principles* – First and foremost, the questions of why we partner and who we partner with need to be considered and resolved before proceeding further. The key issues become: why do we partner with this organization and not others, and how assured is the University that the partner organization has adequate personnel and resource support to ensure the efficient and effective supervision and conduct of a doctoral project? The issue of cross subsidization also needs to be examined carefully as the University is a publicly-funded institution. Such information has to be provided when a draft co-supervision agreement is submitted through the approval channels.
2. *Channels of approval* – Apart from approval by the Department PG committee, the School PG committee and Dean of the School, the Executive Vice-President & Provost (EVPP) or his/her designate, as a neutral third party, is delegated by the Senate the authority to approve or disapprove these co-supervision agreements. If there are major concerns, the issues can be presented to the Committee on Postgraduate Studies and, if appropriate, the Senate for a decision or advice. CPS and Senate should be informed of any agreement or arrangement reached with these non-academic bodies, including a summary of the details of the agreement signed.
3. *Admission of students* – To ensure the quality of research postgraduate students admitted through this channel, it is important to stipulate in the agreement signed with the corporate partner that the University reserves the right to select or reject candidates nominated for the study scheme. These candidates must go through the same procedures of selection as other applicants and meet the admission requirements of the program they have been nominated to enroll for. In order not to deprive students applying through the public channels of their admissions opportunities, the number of these jointly supervised students must be small. The program office should either cap the jointly supervised students by stipulating either a preset ceiling percentage based on the student target.
4. *Student registration* – Unlike regular students who will stay and complete their studies before leaving the University, these jointly supervised students will likely spend a significant portion of their time at their home base after they have completed their coursework requirement at the University. When they are off campus, doing research work at their home base, ideally, they should maintain some form of registration with the University as during that period, their work is still continually monitored by the HKUST co-supervisor. In compliance with the University's requirement, they must be registered students in their final semester of study. In these cases, the minimum residency requirement can be waived.
5. *Supervision* – There will be two co-supervisors for these students, one from HKUST and the other from the partner organization. To ensure the co-supervisor has the appropriate academic competence and research experience in taking up thesis

supervisor work, their credentials should be presented to the HKUST department for review. They should ideally be appointed as adjunct faculty.

6. *Program requirement* – Students are required to fulfill the program requirements of the University. Additional requirements must be made clear in writing as a part of the agreement signed prior to the start of the co-supervision arrangement.
7. *Monitoring of study progress* – The agreement should include specifications concerning the monitoring measures required by the University in terms of study progress. Apart from the annual progress report form, during the period the student is not with the University, the student is required to submit on semester basis a progress report on what he has done in a particular semester for the review of the supervision committee based at HKUST. Feedback on the student made by the co-supervisor from the partner organization is also required.
8. *Termination of registration* – As is the case with regular students, in the event a student does not perform up to the expectations of the supervisors, a written warning should be issued. If there is no improvement in the following semester, the student will be denied continued registration in the semesters that follow.
9. *Thesis examination* – Membership of the examination committee should include the co-supervisor from the partner organization. The thesis examination should be held at HKUST.
10. *Non-disclosure agreement* – To ensure that the University maintains autonomy in its academic work and to avoid allegations of collusion with the private sector in its research endeavors, request for parties of the University involved to sign nondisclosure agreements on the research thesis should be declined. The thesis and the thesis examination should be open to the public.
11. *Intellectual Property* – This issue needs to be spelt out in the agreement to avoid unnecessary dispute between the various stakeholders in future. The University should not enter into an agreement that requires the signing of non-disclosure agreements.
12. *Termination clause* – Any agreement should include a termination clause for either partner to exit the agreement by serving written notice, allowing a reasonable period for the winding up of various matters.

Note:

This guideline was first endorsed by the Senate at its 77th meeting held on 8 June 2005.

**Approval process for joint supervision of RPgs
with non-academic institutions at HKUST**

