

The binational doctoral degree





Doctoral awards ceremony, Université de Strasbourg

The binational doctoral degree

For graduate students who wish to engage in doctoral studies, or professors and researchers who wish to supervise doctoral researchers, the doctorate may, depending on the country of the home university - Germany, France or Switzerland, take on different aspects. The binational doctoral degree (the so-called cotutelle de these) is the main form of internationalisation of the doctorate in the trinational Upper Rhine region, recommended by the member universities of Eucor - The European Campus.

The aim of the cotutelle is to intensify international cooperation in the field of research, while strengthening the mobility of doctoral researchers. It enables to obtain the title of Doctor in two different countries on the basis of a single thesis carried out in two institutions of these two countries and a single defence before a jury of professors and researchers chosen by the two institutions.

This booklet is aimed at doctoral candidates, as well as professors and researchers who can supervise a doctorate, as well as to the administration staff in charge of setting up the doctorate. It aims to draw a parallel of the doctoral rules in the three countries as well as to provide the keys of understanding for the establishment of a binational doctoral degree within Eucor - The European Campus.



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General information on Eucor - The European Campus

The five universities in the trinational Upper Rhine region - the Universität Basel, the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, the Université de Haute-Alsace, the Karlsruher Institut für Technologie and the Université de Strasbourg - have been cooperating for nearly 30 years. In 2015, they decided to take their cross-border academic cooperation further by giving it an official identity.

Eucor - The European Campus, a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was therefore founded. This consortium is the only EGTC in Europe operated by higher education institutions.

With 15,000 researchers, 13,500 doctoral candidates and 117,000 students, Eucor - the European Campus is an internationally-recognised scientific and academic space without borders.

The European Campus focuses on research in the fields of Quantum sciences and technology, Personalised health - Precision Medicine, Sustainability and European identities.

WWW.EUCOR-UNI.ORG



- Universität Basel
- Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg
- Université de Haute-Alsace
- Karlsruher Institut für Technologie (KIT)
- Université de Strasbourg



117,000
STUDENTS



15,000
RESEARCHERS



13,500
DOCTORAL CANDIDATES



960
COURSES

Member universities



Universität Basel

@ www.unibas.ch
> Forschung > Graduate Center

- Traditional multidisciplinary university with 7 faculties, founded in 1460 as the oldest university in Switzerland
- One of the most successful research universities in Europe with a special focus on life sciences and medicine
- Other outstanding research areas, such as nanosciences and quantum physics, visual studies, European and Global studies as well as energy and sustainability research



Albert-Ludwigs- Universität Freiburg

@ www.frs.uni-freiburg.de
> Doctoral Candidates

- A multidisciplinary university with 11 faculties and 19 research centres
- 23 Nobel laureates have studied, taught and researched at the university
- 2 Clusters of Excellence: Cluster Centre for Integrative Biological Signals and Cluster Living, Adaptive and Energy-autonomous Materials Systems



Université de Haute-Alsace

@ www.uha.fr

> La recherche > Doctorat

- Has the oldest chemistry school in France
- Heir to a long tradition of scientific and technical innovation
- 3 strategic research fields divided between 13 laboratories: Chemistry, Functional materials and Environment; Intelligent systems, Data processes, Advanced processes, Advanced textile ; Interculturality : Humanities, Social Sciences, Sustainable Economies



Karlsruher Institut für Technologie

@ www.khys.kit.edu

> Doing a doctorate at KIT

- KIT – The Research University in the Helmholtz Association (Helmholtz-Gemeinschaft)
- One of the largest research and training institutions in the field of natural sciences and engineering in Europe
- From basic research to applications in form of products and process – research, innovation and responsibility in view of global challenges and society



Université de Strasbourg

@ www.unistra.fr

> Recherche > Doctorat

- Multidisciplinary research in 71 research units
- Laureate of the French Excellence Initiative “Investissements d’Avenir”
- 4 Nobel prize, 1 Kavli prize

Pursuing a doctorate within the European Campus

The initiative of the *cotutelle de thèse* is French. A decree of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research dated 18 January 1994 laid the legal basis for the binational doctorate procedure. The decree of 6 January 2005 set the framework of the *cotutelle* in accordance with the guidelines of the project for the constitution of a European higher education and research area.

IN FRANCE

The *cotutelle de thèse* is governed by the decree of 25 May 2016 setting the national framework for doctoral training and the procedures for the issuance of the national doctoral degree¹.

The Université de Strasbourg and the Université de Haute-Alsace have committed to jointly implement a doctoral policy of excellence, by creating a common doctoral college “*collège doctoral de site*”, responsible for coordinating the *écoles doctorales* and driving an ambitious and dynamic doctoral training, guaranteeing the excellence of the degree awarded. Doctoral candidates prepare their theses within research units, which are themselves backed by *écoles doctorales*. The Alsatian site has 10 *écoles doctorales*, the Université de Strasbourg is the support institution for the 10 *écoles doctorales* of which 5 are co-accredited and 2 accredited in joint issue with the Université de Haute-Alsace:

- > Law, Political Science and History: *Droit, sciences politiques et histoire (ED 101)*, Unistra/UHA
- > Economics and management: *Augustin Cournot (ED 221)*, Unistra/UHA
- > Theology and religious studies: *Théologie et sciences religieuses (ED 270)*, Unistra
- > Humanities and social sciences : *Sciences Humaines et sociales – Perspectives européennes (ED 519)*, Unistra/UHA
- > Humanities: *Humanités (ED 520)*, Unistra/UHA
- > Physics and Physical Chemistry : *Physique et chimie-physique (ED 182)*, Unistra/UHA
- > Chemistry : *Sciences chimiques (ED 222)*, Unistra/UHA
- > Mathematics, Information science and Engineering: *Mathématiques, sciences de l’information et de l’ingénieur (ED 269)*, Unistra/UHA
- > Earth and environmental sciences: *Sciences de la Terre et de l’environnement (ED 413)*, Unistra
- > Life Sciences and Health: *Sciences de la vie et de la santé (ED 414)*, Unistra



IN GERMANY

Because of the federal structure of the country, there are no national regulation for doctorate, so each university can have its own functioning and rules. The laws of Baden-Württemberg in the field of higher education in 2014 and 2018, «Landeshochschulgesetz» and «Hochschulrechtsweiterentwicklungsgesetz», however, introduced qualitative measures and created a special status for doctoral researchers. At the Universität Freiburg, as well as at KIT, each faculty has its own doctoral regulations.

At the Universität Freiburg, it is possible to do a doctorate in one of the 11 faculties, as part of an individual doctorate or a doctoral programme offered in many fields. The doctoral regulations («Promotionsordnungen») of the faculties are available at this address:

www.jsl.uni-freiburg.de/promotionsordnungen

At the Karlsruher Institut für Technologie, it is also possible to enrol for an individual doctorate, the classic form of doctorate, or to join one of the doctoral programmes offered at KIT. All the doctoral regulations («Promotionsordnungen») of the 11 faculties are available at this address:

www.khys.kit.edu/promotionsordnungen.php

> In terms of binational doctorate, the Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (German Rectors' Conference) strongly recommends modifying the regulations governing the access and the course of doctoral training, when they are contradictory, in order to allow the setting up of cotutelle de thèse.

IN SWITZERLAND

Each faculty has its own regulations for doctoral training. The doctorate can also be carried out either as part of an individual doctorate or as part of a structured doctoral programme.

The doctoral regulations for each of the seven universities of the Universität Basel are available at: www.unibas.ch/de/Forschung/Graduate-Center/GRACE/Dokumente-und-Richtlinien.html

By 2021, each faculty will be attached to a doctoral school «Graduiertenschule» on which each doctoral researcher will depend.

¹ The ministerial decree of May 25, 2016 can be downloaded at the following URL: [https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte= JORFTEXT000032587086](https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000032587086)



ADVANTAGES OF A COTUTELLE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF EUCOR - THE EUROPEAN CAMPUS

FOR DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS

- A. It offers them a unique opportunity to approach two university cultures and two different scientific universes in depth.
- B. It allows them to obtain a doctoral degree in two countries.
- C. It gives them access to the infrastructure of two universities as well as local networks.
- D. It enables them to significantly expand their linguistic and intercultural skills.
- E. It improves their academic positioning. Access to the labour market outside the university sector is also facilitated.
- F. It makes it possible to follow disciplinary and transversal training in both countries.

FOR INSTITUTIONS

- A. It constitutes an attractive offer to attract the best foreign elements from Europe and even the world, notably in a number of key disciplines where the member universities occupy a high level ranking at a European and world level.
- B. It constitutes a concrete and important element of the Europeanisation and internationalisation of French, German and Swiss higher education; in this joint form for its five universities, it allows Eucor - The European Campus to stand out in the European Higher Education Area.
- C. It offers another form of cooperation in the field of research and enables the intensification of existing cross-border cooperation.



The establishment of a cotutelle de thèse

Binational doctorate is very successful. Most higher education institutions that have embarked on this path have succeeded in homogenising procedures and proposing standard models of cotutelle agreements:

THE COTUTELLE AGREEMENT

The cotutelle agreement is an agreement concluded between two institutions of higher education aiming to set up a cooperation under a joint supervision and to set out the conditions. It can be designed individually or adopt an already existing model. It is important to ensure that the agreement complies with the current regulations governing the doctorate in both institutions.


A COTUTELLE AGREEMENT MUST SPECIFY THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:


- > Partner institutions as well as laws and rules in force in each institution on which the agreement is based;
- > Administrative arrangements (registration, tuition and registration fees, duration, social security cover);
- > The organisation of the thesis (subject, supervision and monitoring of the thesis, languages used, distribution of stays between the two institutions, rights and duties for the doctoral researcher... etc.) ;
- > The specific training programme to validate if necessary;
- > The conditions of defence (place, composition of the jury, support for travel expenses of the jury, modalities and language of defence);
- > The conditions of filing, publication, protection and valuation of the thesis and research results;
- > The issue, form and content of the degree(s);
- > The signatures (of the doctoral researcher, of their thesis directors, of the director of the école doctorale on the French side, of the dean of faculty on the German and Swiss side, of the presidents / university rectors);
- > Special provisions.


IMPORTANT PREREQUISITES

ADMISSION

The basic prerequisite for an individual contract of cooperation is to fulfill the conditions for admission to doctoral studies in the two institutions concerned.


 In France, you must hold a master's degree or a diploma of equivalent level to qualify for a doctorate. The écoles doctorales are responsible for admission to doctoral studies and may impose additional prerequisites depending on the theme.


 According to §38 of the Landeshochschulgesetz of Baden-Württemberg, a Master's degree or a diploma of at least 4 years of study is required to register for a doctorate. Faculties are in charge of admission to doctoral studies and may also impose other special prerequisites.

 In principle, Swiss universities also require a master's degree or equivalent for doctoral enrolment. At the Universität Basel, the Student Services are responsible for admission to the doctorate in consultation with the faculties. Doctorate students enrolled for less than 12 months in both universities and who fulfil the conditions described in the information sheet on cotutelle can apply for a binational joint supervision.

REGISTRATION AND TUITIONS FEES

Throughout the cotutelle, the doctoral researcher must be enrolled in both universities. As a matter of principle, you must pay registration or tuition fees only in one of the two universities. You enjoy the same rights in both institutions and are held to the same duties as the other doctoral researchers.


 In the context of a cotutelle de thèse, the Collège doctoral requests that the registration fees be set alternately between the two institutions. French law makes it possible to transform a thesis into cotutelle only during the first year following the registration in thesis. The Collège doctoral validated in its council that a cotutelle must be put in place during the first year of doctoral studies and before the second registration in doctorate.

 Since 2018, doctoral students have to register with the Service Center Studium of the Universität Freiburg, or for the KIT, the Studierendenservice for German doctoral candidates or the International Office for foreign doctoral candidates.

This rule does not apply to doctoral researchers with a work contract with a quota of more than 50% of working time.

More information about the procedures at the University of Freiburg at: www.frs.uni-freiburg.de/de/iga/promotion.

At KIT, enrolment as a doctoral candidate at KHYS (Karlsruhe House of Young Scientists) is also mandatory: www.khys.kit.edu/khys_registrierungsportal.php

 At the Universität Basel, each doctoral candidate must sign a doctoral agreement with their main supervisor ("Ersbetreuer/in"). In the context of a cotutelle de thèse, this agreement is completed by a second agreement agreed between the two institutions concerned by the joint supervision. The cotutelle agreement must be signed at the latest during the 3rd semester after admission to doctoral studies.



SUPERVISION OF THESIS

The doctoral candidate must choose at least two supervisors from two partner universities in two different countries. They must agree on the title of the thesis, both commit themselves to coordinate the scientific supervision of the dissertation with each other and agree on the necessary measures to this end. To identify a supervisor in the partner university, it is recommended to use the contacts already available to the main supervisor.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Support and reimbursement of travel expenses for doctoral researchers, supervisors, reporters and external members of the jury is governed by the provisions adopted by each of the member universities in terms of potential financial support internal or external to the institution.

It is also possible to call on external funding (see page 18) such as those of the Franco-German University (UFA), swissuniversities, the Interdisciplinary Center for Studies and Research on Germany (CIERA), the German Academic Exchange Office (DAAD)

STAY IN THE PARTNER INSTITUTION

A substantially equal distribution of the research time between the two institutions is strongly recommended. This equitable distribution must make it possible to fully ensure the bi-cultural dimension of this research training which, compared to the current form of the thesis, constitutes one of the essential capital gains of the cotutelle both scientifically and linguistically as well as the culture of the host country. This is also the reason why the cotutelle agreement must be signed as soon as possible after admission to the doctorate.

- ■ The aim of the Collège doctoral de site - Université de Strasbourg is to reach 50% of time of presence in each country. However, a minimum presence on the Alsatian site equivalent to one third of the period covered by the cotutelle agreement may be tolerated.
- + The Universität Basel requires a stay at the partner university of a total duration corresponding to half of the thesis period (up to the examination) and at least 12 months.

PROTECTION OF THE THESIS SUBJECT AND PUBLICATION

The evaluation and protection of the results are subject to the directives respectively in force in the two countries concerned by cotutelles. The number of copies of the thesis to be provided in each of the universities is also provided for by the respective directives of the institutions concerned. Institutions must inform each other of the requirements of these directives. It is nevertheless important to remind doctoral candidates to enquire precisely as soon as their registration/admission is completed concerning their thesis in the relevant universities.




LANGUAGE

Within Eucor - The European Campus, the two languages in use are French and German. The general rule of cotutelle is to write the thesis in one language and to summarise it in the other language. The regulation of the doctorate can provide that the writing of the thesis can be done in English. In this case, the doctoral candidate will have to produce a substantial summary in French and German. It must also be provided that the oral tests are held, at least partly, in these two languages.






ORAL EXAMINATION - DEFENCE

The contracting partners must agree in advance on the modalities of the oral examination. They must appear in the cooperation agreement as well as the place of defence. Generally, the conditions and place of examination depend on the home university.

-  In France, the thesis defence consists of an oral examination in which the doctoral candidate presents their research work before a jury of specialists. The work of the doctoral researcher is examined beforehand by at least two reporters before the defence. The defence is usually public.
-  In Germany, the oral examination can take the form of a «Disputation» or a «Kolloquium», in other words a public defence with a presentation of research works and exchanges on broader themes, or a «Rigorosum», which is an examination related to the discipline of the thesis as well as to other subjects.
-  At the Universität Basel, a Doktoratsexamen will be held during which the doctoral researcher presents their research work to the jury. The work of the doctoral candidate is the subject of independent reports by all Doktoratskomitee members who also take part in the oral examination.

COMPOSITION OF THE JURY

The parties must agree on its composition. It is formed on the basis of a principle of balance between the representatives proposed by the two universities and will be validated by both institutions.

-  In France, the panel is generally made up of 4 to 8 people, including the supervisor(s), the reporters and the examiners (professors and researchers). At least half of the members of the jury must be external to the école doctorale and the institution concerned and are professors or equivalent. Thesis supervisors participate in the jury, but do not take part in the decision.
-  In Germany, the Prüfungskommission or Prüfungsausschuss brings together at least two evaluators as well as the supervisor(s).
-  At the Universität Basel, the jury is made up of all the members of the Doktoratskomitee mentioned in the doctoral agreement. In Switzerland, there is no distinction between supervisors and evaluators.

EVALUATION

The institutions concerned must first draw up an agreement on the evaluation method. Because of the cultural differences in the evaluation methods in Germany, France and Switzerland and the effects they can have on access to employment, it is difficult to agree on a single marking method. It is therefore recommended to take into consideration the evaluation system of the two selected countries.

-  The Université de Strasbourg does not issue a note or honours.

DEGREE

In principle, the universities can either issue a joint degree or award two degrees mentioning that the dissertation was held as part of a cotutelle de thèse in cooperation with a foreign university. In practice, the member universities of Eucor - The European Campus most often use two separate degrees.

Cotutelle in four steps

1

OPTING FOR A BINATIONAL DOCTORATE

This decision concerns everyone involved in the process. At this stage of the process, the doctoral candidate must know the subject of their thesis, be admitted to doctoral studies and have obtained the agreement of their supervisors in both institutions concerned and the école doctorale for the French part for joint work.

2

PROCEED WITH DRAFTING THE COTUTELLE AGREEMENT

Agree on the modalities and configuration of the cotutelle process. Set the framework in the cotutelle agreement established in collaboration with the relevant department of each institution.

3

CHECK THE LEGAL VALIDITY OF THE AGREEMENT

This operation is the responsibility of the departments responsible for cotutelle in each institution. The Coordination Office of Eucor – the European Campus can help during the negotiation phase.



At the Université de Strasbourg and at the Université de Haute-Alsace, the Collège doctoral and its local branch at the UHA are competent in the field of cotutelles de thèse.



In Germany, the legal services of universities – at the University of Freiburg the Rechtsdezernat and at the KIT the Hochschulrecht und Akademische Angelegenheit (HAA) service – are responsible for checking the legal validity of the convention.



At the Universität Basel, the legal validity of the convention is verified by the Vice President's Office for Education as well as by the deanship of the faculty concerned.

4

SIGN THE CONVENTION

The agreement must be signed by the doctoral candidate, the supervisors, the école doctorale's director on the French side, the dean of faculty on the German or Swiss side, the presidents or rectors of the two universities concerned.



Practical information

FUNDING POSSIBILITIES

Each university has its own mode of operation in terms of doctoral funding. There is, however, specific funding to cover the additional costs incurred by the cotutelle de thèse:

THE FRANCO-GERMAN UNIVERSITY (UFA/DFH)

Awards grants of up to EUR 5,000 to doctoral researchers in joint supervision between two German and French universities. This aid is divided between the travel and accommodation costs of the doctoral candidate within the framework of the research project (up to a maximum of EUR 4,000) and the travel and accommodation costs related to the defence (up to a maximum of EUR 1,000).

> More information

www.dfh-ufa.org > *Vous êtes> Futur étudiant – Étudiant – Doctorant - Diplôm*
> *Doctorant > Cotutelle de thèse*

THE INTERDISCIPLINARY CENTRE FOR STUDIES AND RESEARCH ON GERMANY (CIERA)

Also offers various mobility aids for a research stay in Germany for doctoral candidates in humanities and social sciences.

> More information:

www.ciera.fr > Mobilité

THE DEUTSCHER AKADEMISCHER AUSTAUSCHDIENST (DAAD - THE GERMAN ACADEMIC EXCHANGE OFFICE)

Awards grants of up to 7 to 18 months for research stays as part of a cotutelle. For German doctoral candidates staying in France, this monthly scholarship amounts to EUR 1,475, for stays in Switzerland to EUR 1,675 over a period of 7 to 12 months. For their stay in Germany, doctoral candidates from a partner university can claim a monthly scholarship of EUR 1,200 per month for a maximum duration of 18 months.

> More information

For German doctoral candidates:

www.daad.de > *Info for Deutsche> Studieren im Ausland> Stipendien und Finanzen*

For foreign doctoral candidates:

www.daad.de/en/ > *Information for Foreigners > Finding scholarships> Scholarship database*

SWISSUNIVERSITIES

Supports doctoral students in cotutelle between a Swiss university and a partner university up to a maximum of CHF 10,000 to cover their travel and subsistence expenses as well as those of their Swiss supervisors. Applications must be submitted by the Vice President's Office for Education of the Universität Basel before 31 March of each year.

> More information

www.swissuniversities.cf/en > Topics > Promotion of young talent > Cotutelles de thèse

THE UNIVERSITÉ DE STRASBOURG

Offers the opportunity for doctoral candidates to join the International Doctoral Programme. This program offers many benefits, such as priority access to housing, trainings and specific financial assistance.

> More information

www.unistra.fr > Recherche > Doctorat > Pôle international
> Programme Doctoral International (PDI)

MODÈLE DE CONVENTION DE COTUTELLE

> Swissuniversities (Rectors' Conference of Swiss Higher Education Institutions):

www.swissuniversities.ch/fileadmin/swissuniversities/Dokumente/Forschung/Cotutelles_de_these/BEC_Cotutelles_de_th%C3%A8se/2018_Contrat_DE_FR.docx

> Hochschulrektorenkonferenz:

www.hrk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/hrk/02-Dokumente/02-07-Internationales/02-07-05-Mobilitaet-und-Anerkennung/02-07-05-02-Cotutelle/Cotutelle_Leitfaden_ausfuehrlich.pdf



ERDF – European Regional Development Fund
“Transcending borders with every project”



Information

UNIVERSITÄT BASEL

www.unibas.ch/en/ > Reserach> Graduate Center> Doctoral Candidates> Mobility> Cotutelle de thèse
cotutelle@unibas.ch

ALBERT-LUDWIGS-UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG

www.frs.uni-freiburg.de/en/ > Doctoral candidates

UNIVERSITY OF HAUTE-ALSACE

www.uha.fr> Recherche> Doctorat
ecoles.doctorales@uha.fr

KARLSRUHER INSTITUTE FOR TECHNOLOGY

www.khys.kit.edu/english/1091.php

UNIVERSITÉ DE STRASBOURG

www.en.unistra.fr > Research> Doctoral studies
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