

Recruiting new Ph.D. students with a Dual Degree Agreement

Dual Degree or Cotutelle Agreements are doctoral degree programs undertaken between two universities, where each university awards a separate doctoral degree after a dissertation defense.

In the past two years, the International Office has facilitated the approval of Dual Degree/Cotutelle agreements on behalf of faculty. The objective of these agreements is to support your recruitment of new international Ph.D. students through existing collaborations or to support establishing a collaboration with faculty at external universities. Under this arrangement, our research collaborations can jointly supervise a student who will earn a degree from two universities while contributing to your research outcomes.

Navigating the Dual Degree or Cotutelle Process

Faculty advisor will:



Step 1: Identify an incoming international Ph.D. Candidate.



Step 2: Contact the International Office (IO) to discuss the opportunity.



Step 3: Complete *Study Plan* with collaborator on dissertation topic (in English) and Committee members, residency timeline between universities, financial agreement (50/50) for student, and planned graduation timeline.



Step 4: Submit *Study Plan* to the Academic Dean for review and approval.

If approved, then:



Step 5: Faculty advisor submits the *Study Plan* to the IO to proceed with partner university.



Step 6: The student should apply to KAUST admissions and faculty member should advise the program admissions committee of the pending Dual Degree/Cotutelle agreement.



Step 7: IO facilitates the agreement with the partner university and contacts Office of General Counsel, Registrar and Admissions to review the document.



Step 8: IO seeks approval by KAUST VP of Academic Affairs before signatures are gathered.

Dual Degree/Cotutelle Frequently Asked Questions

What are the pillars of a Dual Degree?

- A faculty advisor at each university
- A doctoral student enrolled at each university
- An agreement to be signed by both universities

Which universities may KAUST faculty consider for a Dual Degree agreement?

Any University whose governance allows for the Dual Degree/Cotutelle collaboration. The opportunity of having a Dual Degree agreement should be assessed according to:

- The partner university academic program
- Research activities and/or new opportunity to collaborate

May an incoming Ph.D. student initiate the process?

Yes, if a collaboration between the student's advisor and a faculty colleague from another university is already in place. The student should present their interest to their advisor, who is responsible for discussing with the colleague, defining the project details, and approaching their dean for endorsement.

In which year of the doctorate can the student be considered a Dual Degree candidate?

- Before starting the first year
- Within the first year

Dual Degrees for students already enrolled will be assessed for approval on a case by case basis with the Dean.

Does the student have to enroll at both universities?

Yes, as part of finalizing the Dual Degree agreement, the student should apply and be accepted as a doctoral student at KAUST and the second university.

What must the faculty advisors agree upon prior to submitting the Student Study Plan to the Academic Dean?

- Dissertation topic (in English)
- Dissertation committee
- Academic program
- Student funding at each university
- Timeline at each university
- Oversight and evaluation

What role does the International Office play in the Dual Degree process?

The International Office will facilitate the process of negotiating, and finalizing the agreement with the partner University. We use a KAUST Dual Degree agreement template, although specific conditions can be negotiated and included in each case.

Who are the signatories?

- Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs (or equivalent for the other institution)
- Academic Deans (or equivalent for the other institution)
- Faculty Advisors
- Student (who signs the Study Plan only).

What benefits does the student receive from KAUST under a Dual Degree?

During periods of residence, incoming students will receive the KAUST Fellowship offered to graduate students:

- Full tuition
- Housing
- Medical/dental insurance plan
- Monthly stipend
- Relocation support
- Annual repatriation allowance
- Travel support to fly to partner university's location

Is there a minimum period of stay stipulated at each university?

Periods of stay are determined by faculty advisors with the intention to achieve equally shared residency upon research outcomes. Dual Degree students must meet the minimum residency requirements for Ph.D. students at KAUST (two and a half years).

Who issues the doctoral degree?

Both universities issue a doctoral degree (one diploma for each university). In addition, each university issues a transcript acknowledging the Dual Degree arrangement.

KAUST Ph.D. requirements:

The KAUST Ph.D. program requires a two-and a-half-year residency for students entering with a master's degree.

The Ph.D. degree includes the following components:

- (i) successfully passing Ph.D. coursework,
- (ii) designating an academic advisor,
- (iii) successfully passing a qualifying exam (if applicable), and
- (iv) passing the dissertation proposal defense.

Additional information is available at the [KAUST Registrar office website](#).

Definitions and Key Considerations

Dual Degree:

Is a doctorate degree program agreement between two universities in different countries, each of which will award a separate doctoral degree after a dissertation defense.

Cotutelle:

Is the French name for a Dual Degree and commonly used through Europe. The premise is the same, as each university awards a degree separately.

Financial Arrangement:

The KAUST Fellowship is to be used by the student while at KAUST. When the student is at the partner university for courses or research, their financial arrangement is to be determined by the collaborating researcher.



Are you interested in learning where we have Dual Degree/Cotutelle Agreements and other International Office Agreements?

Go to [Terradotta](#), our Agreement Management system