

## JOINT DOCTORATES A GUIDELINE FOR PHDS

**Joint doctorates** are done at two degree-awarding institutions. This type of doctorate, does not mean that you are simply supervised by one supervisor in one university with another advising you on an informal basis. Joint doctorates mean that you are fully registered at two universities, having to comply with admission requirements and assessment regulations at both institutions and that it will result either in two PhD degrees (double PhD) or one jointly-awarded PhD (one diploma with the two university logos). The reason universities offering double degrees rather than jointly-awarded degrees is often practical in nature, for example one country's legislation does not allow joint-degrees. A joint doctorate confirms in a way an intensive (International) collaboration between two partner universities.

As this can be complicated, we provide this guidance document to save you time and to give you some pointers on how to submit your PhD thesis to both universities simultaneously and adhere to all guidelines.

Please check first the MHeNs PhD guide for all general information for all MHeNs PhD students.

### **Contact persons of the MHeNs Office:**

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## 1. REGISTRATION AND REQUIREMENTS

### *IN GENERAL*

A joint doctorate can lead to a joint or a double doctorate degree. With a joint doctorate degree is meant one degree ceremony recognized by both universities, where the doctoral candidate obtains a doctoral degree with one doctoral thesis and where after a successful completion of the doctoral research the two universities jointly award one single diploma. A double doctorate refers to one- or two-degree ceremonies, where after a successful completion of the doctoral research the universities each independently award a diploma.

To get a joint or double doctorate degree, a **doctoral agreement** has to be signed by both universities. With some universities MHeNs (FHML/UM) already has established an **umbrella agreement for joint doctorates** but still an individual doctoral agreement has to be signed between the two universities for you as the PhD candidate.

The negotiations about this agreement have to be started in the first two years of your PhD trajectory, to be counted from the start of the doctorate. You also will be asked to sign the agreement. If the agreement is fully signed, you will get a copy of it. In the agreement specific appointments will be made between the universities, regarding the supervisors, subject of the thesis, assessment, the defence procedure. In addition, confidentiality and intellectual property aspects are described, taking into account the regulations of both universities. In the case of specific financial arrangements between the universities, they will be added in the agreement as well.

Every PhD candidate has a **home university** and a **partner (host) university**. Information about this can be found in the agreement. In general, you have to pay the tuition fee (if applicable) at your home university. At the UM no tuition has to be paid.

Any contribution towards the costs related to periods of research spent at the partner university, attendance of national and international conferences, the organisation of the PhD defence, and other costs specific to the PhD programme shall be discussed and determined in mutual agreement between the supervisors of the universities in close consultation with the MHeNs managing director before the the PhD trajectory starts.

### *AT UM*

You need to be registered at the UM and the registration through MHeNs implies registration at the FHML and the university. You do not need to pay tuition fee as a PhD student at UM since you will be employed by the UM so you not have a “student” status. This is not the case for many partner universities.

You will be guided in the registration process and the PhD TRACK system by the MHeNs coordinating office (see the MHeNs PhD guide).

### *AT THE PARTNER UNIVERSITY*

You need to check how to register as a PhD student at the partner university. We recommend to check if there are specific requirements of the doctoral training programme. At some universities you have to meet the requirements of the doctoral training programme to get a PhD degree. At UM this is not the case, PhD students can still obtain a PhD degree, without meeting the MHeNs educational programme requirements for the MHeNs certificate. See the general MHeNs PhD guide for the information on the

MHeNs educational programme and certificate:

<https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/research/mhens/phd-programme/phd-information>

## **2. SUPERVISION, JOINT PHD THESIS REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS TOWARDS THE DEFENCE**

You need at least 2 supervisors, with a maximum of 4. In case you have more than 4 supervisors, at UM a request to be allowed to derogate from article 34 sub 2 under e from the Doctoral Degree Regulations, stating the reasons, must be submitted to the dean by the supervisor. In such a request must be explained per supervisor his contribution and why he or she is indispensable. Before you start writing the thesis you will have to be in close contact with your supervisors and inform yourself what the doctoral thesis requirements are at both universities. These requirements may vary. At some universities the thesis may consist of several published and/or submitted publications whereas at other universities they expect you to write a monograph. We also recommend to check with the partner university what they expect from you regarding the thesis format, logo's and cover. In case you think there are inconsistencies or ambiguities, contact your supervisors.

At both the universities they might have different systems to check the quality of the thesis so you need to know the different expectations.

At UM the supervisor(s) will evaluate whether the **doctoral thesis requirements** have been met for a PhD at Maastricht University (in consultation with the MHeNs Scientific director).

The supervisor(s) jointly make the decision about submitting the doctoral thesis to the UM **assessment committee**. The UM assessment committee will decide on the question of whether you have provided, by means of the thesis, such evidence of your competence to carry out independent academic work, that the thesis can be accepted as a doctoral thesis and that you can be admitted to the degree ceremony. The UM assessment committee consists of at least four and no more than five members. The (co-) supervisors cannot be part of the assessment committee. The chairman of the assessment committee is a professor at UM.

In case there is one **public defence**, it has to be negotiated between the universities where the defense will take place. In case there are two public defenses, the first public defence has to take place at the UM. Please be aware that in case a public defence has been taken place at the foreign university and the degree of that university has been awarded, it will not be possible anymore to have a public defence at UM and get a degree from the UM. If required by the partner university, an internal, not public defence can be organized prior to the public defense. This has to be agreed upon beforehand in the doctoral agreement.

*At the start of your research project, but at least 6 months before the date of your public defense:*

Consult the latest version of the Regulations for obtaining the doctoral degree Maastricht University timely, to be found at <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/support/phds>.

Submit Model letter 1: Request for exemption as meant in Article 2 under 2 of the Doctoral Degree Regulation, but only in case you do not fulfil the admission criteria for the degree ceremony as

mentioned in article 1 sub 2. Model letters can be found at <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/support/phds>.

Submit Model letter 2: Request for admission to the doctoral degree ceremony at Maastricht University to the Board of Deans, to be found at: <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/support/phds>. This request has to be signed by your supervisors as well. We advise you to do this early in your PhD trajectory, especially when you have a foreign diploma.

Submit Model letter 3: Acceptance of manuscript and proposal for the composition of the Assessment Committee. This letter has to be signed by the supervisors and has to be send to the Dean Faculty of Health Medicine and Life Sciences (FHML).

Once the chairman of the Board of Deans has appointed the assessment committee you can send them the draft of your thesis.

As soon as the assessment committee has approved the thesis (which may take 4 weeks), the chair of the assessment committee will send a Statement of the Assessment Committee concerning the defence of the dissertation (Model letter 4). In article 20 under 3 of the doctoral regulations the topics contemplated by the assessment committee are stipulated.

*At least 3 months before the public defense:*

Fix a (provisional) date for the public defence by calling the Office for Academic Ceremonies: 31-(0)43-3883096/82551.

When the date is fixed, e-mail your title page and the backside of the title page (Model letter 5a and 5b) to the Office for Academic Ceremonies ([PhD-office@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:PhD-office@maastrichtuniversity.nl)).

The supervisor has to submit Model letter 6 to the Board of Deans: The propositions.

At least 1 month before the public defense:

The supervisor has to submit Model letter 7 to the Board of Deans: The names of the members of the defence committee.

*At least 3 weeks before the public defense:*

At least 6 paperbound booklets should be handed in at the Office for Academic Ceremonies 3 weeks before the ceremony at the latest, and a digital copy is to be send to the University Library and your School/Department (<https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/um-regulation-publication-thesis>).

If you have read this and you still have questions on the above, you can contact the UM Office for Academic Ceremonies: [Phd-office@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:Phd-office@maastrichtuniversity.nl)

### **3. THE UM ASSESMENT COMMITTEE AND THE PUBLIC DEFENCE COMMITTEE**

The supervisors and co-supervisors jointly make the decision about submitting the doctoral thesis to the assessment committee.

An assessment committee will decide on the question of whether you have provided, by means of the thesis, such evidence of your competence to carry out independent academic work, that the thesis can be accepted as a doctoral thesis and that you can be admitted to the degree ceremony. The Assessment Committee consists of 4 to 6 members and shall be made up of at least one member from each of the universities and of two members who are not attached to either of the cooperating universities. With respect to the other members, there should be an equal distribution of the members between the two universities if possible. At least half of the members have to be professors. The (co-)supervisors are not part of the assessment committee. The chairman of the assessment committee is a professor at UM.

The feedback from this assessment committee will be given to both supervisors immediately after this assessment. The communication of the result of the assessment to you will take place via the chairman of the assessment committee.

The Board of Deans decides on the composition of the defence committee. In case of only one defence, the Board of Deans of the partner university often has to decide upon the composition of this committee as well, in accordance with their regulations. If this is the case for you, you can verify in the agreement.

The members of the assessment committee and the (co-)supervisors are part of the defence committee. The defence committee can be supplemented with, among others, professors and holders of a doctoral degree. The members of the defence committee (the (co-) supervisors included), in so far as they come from the two universities, will be as far as possible divided equally between both universities. The chairman of the doctoral jury is the rector of the institution where the defence takes place, or a deputy.

#### **4. AFTER THE DEFENCE**

In general, the UM diploma will be given to you immediately after successful completion of the defence at the UM. In case of one public defense, the diploma of the partner university usually will be provided later. Check the administration of the partner university to get clear if additional information is needed, such as a (signed) report from the defence or the deliberations that take place after the defense. Once the student administration receives this information they can start with your official diploma.

An additional diploma certificate from UM signed by the Rector will be given to you to confirm the double degree/supervision PhD degree.

The PhD candidate is, under conditions, entitled to an allowance for costs associated with the PhD ceremony (see also the MHeNs PhD guide).

ANY QUESTIONS LEFT?

If you have read this and you still have questions, you can contact the contact persons of the MHeNs office, see above or the UM Office for Academic Ceremonies: [Phd-office@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:Phd-office@maastrichtuniversity.nl).