

# Challenges related to international collaborative programmes in Europe

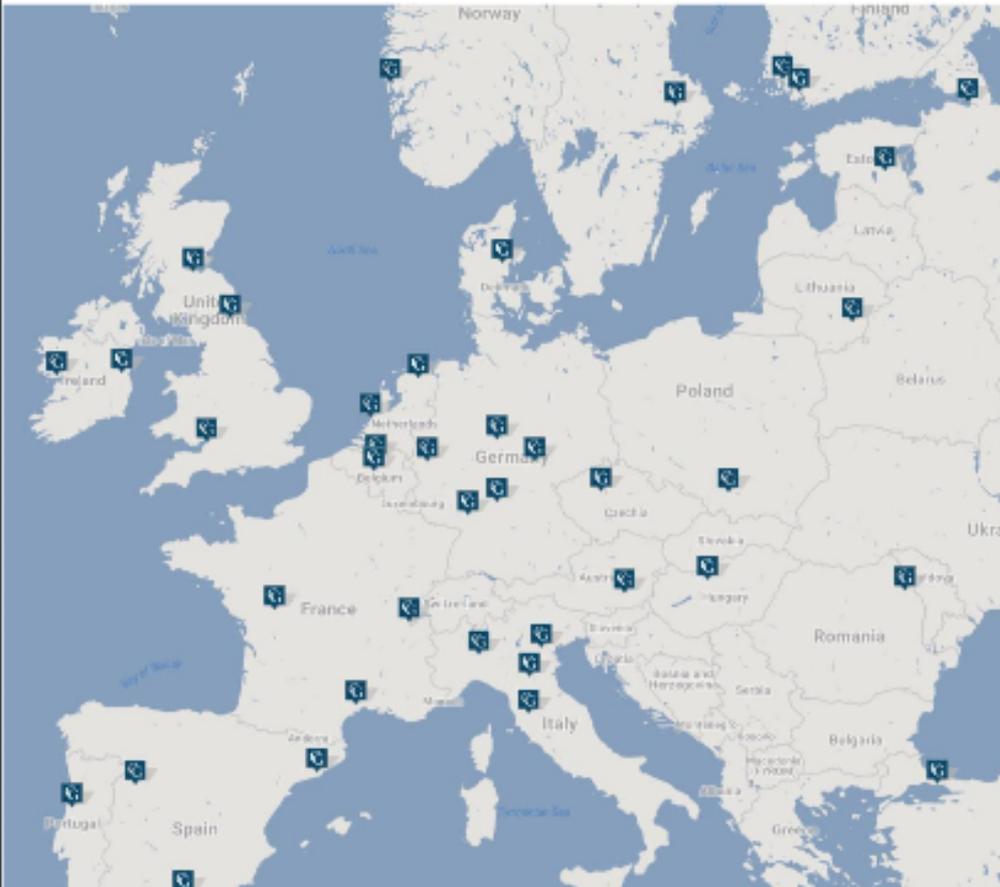
—

## Can a „one size fits all“ approach work?

YEBO! Training Session 3

Dr. Gunda Huskobla, Coimbra Group  
Doctoral Studies Working Group

## COIMBRA GROUP: FACTS AND FIGURES



- **39** Universities from **23** European countries
- **>1,4M** students
- **>226 000** staff (teaching, research, admin.)
- The latest overview (2014), showed that **36 000** students had undertaken Erasmus mobility to/from CG universities (**16%** of all Erasmus students in Europe)
- **Multi-billion €** total annual Research budget

### About the network:

- Long-established, comprehensive and multidisciplinary European universities
  - Networking and strategic partnerships
  - Promote internationalisation, academic collaboration, excellence in learning and research, service to society
  - Contribute to the debate on higher education in Europe and, where appropriate, influence European policy
  - Develop best practice through mutual exchange
- WG Doctoral Studies

A systematic approach to international mobility schemes

# **INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIVE PHD PROGRAMMES**

- Guest researchers
- Free-Movers
- **“Sandwich” PhD programmes**
- **Double and joint degree PhD programmes**

institutionalisation

A blue vertical arrow pointing downwards, indicating a trend or process.

- Challenges related to international collaborative PhD programmes in Europe

# TYPES OF INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIVE PhD PROGRAMMES

## „Sandwich“ PhD Programme

Contract

One university is home university

Significant research stay at partner institution

Degree of home university

## Double Degree PhD Programme

Contract

Admission at both universities

Significant research stay at partner institution

Two interlaced documents

Confirms that it sticks to two national standards

## Joint Degree PhD Programme

Contract

Admission at both universities

Significant research stay at partner institution

One joint document

New examination regulation for this programme which may deviate from national regulations

Diversity of national legislation, higher education systems, goals

# **INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIVE PHD PROGRAMMES - CHALLENGES**

## CHALLENGES RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMMES

Challenges due to

- **different regulation by national standards**
  - **different higher education systems**
  - different goals of involved parties (individual motivation vs. institutional policies vs. national/EU/international agenda setting)
- 
- Doctoral education landscape in Europe is highly diverse and heterogeneous!
  - Challenges affect not only the institutional, but also the individual level (i.e. challenges for doctoral supervisors)!

## UNBRIDGEABLE DIFFERENCES?

- How much deviation from national legislation is allowed? Some national systems are very strict. Deviations are very bureaucratic or even impossible.
  - Example: „Supervisor must be a member of the committee“ vs. „Supervisor is not allowed to be a member of the committee“.
  - Example: Admission to PhD programmes with a Bachelor degree vs. Requirement of 5 years of university training / a Master degree.
  - University-internal „No-Go“-criteria, e.g. joint degrees only with equal time distributions at the partner institutions (or minimum requirements of a research stay of at least one year at the partner institution).
- 
- Incompatible? Feasible? Compromise possible?
  - Communication!

## EXAMPLE ON DIFFERENT NATIONAL STANDARDS: ACADEMIC TRADITION IN GERMANY

- Authority is shared between national government, federal state governments, universities, and faculties
- Balance of power between central units and faculties (traditionally leaning towards faculties)
  - Right to award doctorates: Faculties (Dr.rer.nat., Dr.phil. etc.)
- Freedom of research and teaching (guaranteed by German constitution)
  - Professors decide (basically alone) whether to accept someone as doctoral candidate
- Strong research orientation of study programmes at universities
  - Student phase with obligatory courses is over when entering the doctoral phase
  - Doctoral candidates as early stage researchers (qualification through own research)
  - Doctorate without master's degree is very unusual
- Universities of applied sciences have no right to confer doctorates
  - Joint supervision with a university professor possible

## EXAMPLE ON DIFFERENT NATIONAL STANDARDS: KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DOCTORATE IN GERMANY

### **Core of doctorate:**

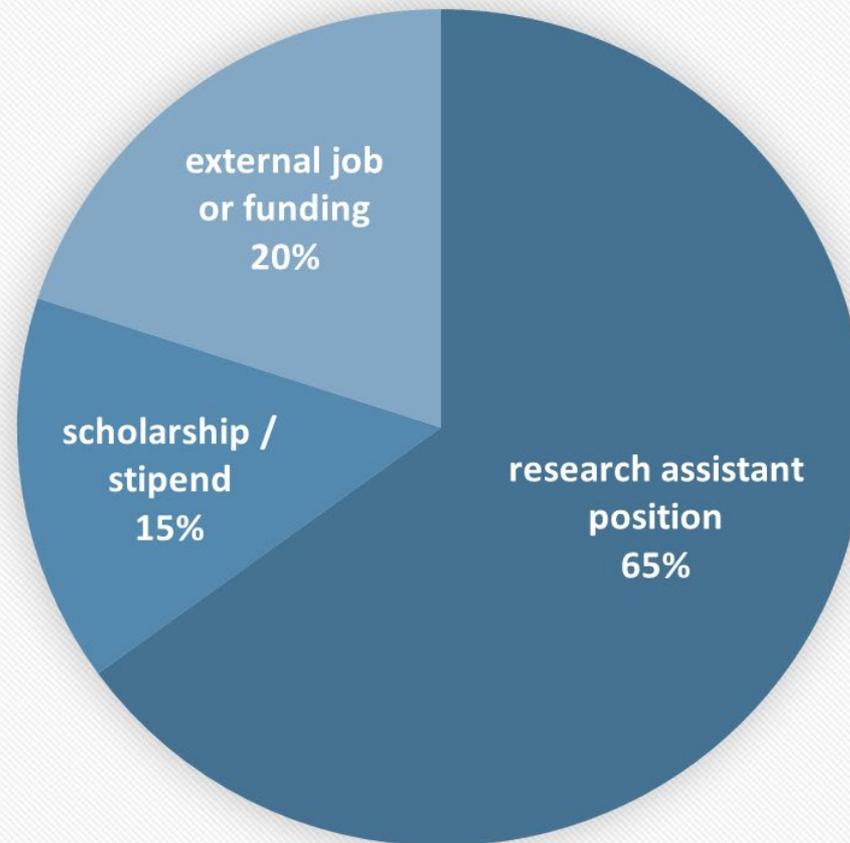
- 3-5 years of research – own research project
- supervised by a professor or Dr. habil.
- Prerequisite: Acceptance as a doctoral candidate by the supervisor
- Colloquia (weekly/monthly) and integration into scientific community (optional)

### **Formal requirements for awarding the doctoral degree:**

- Doctoral thesis plus oral exam (defence) plus publication of thesis
- Supervisor is reviewer and member of the examination committee

## EXAMPLE ON DIFFERENT NATIONAL STANDARDS: FUNDING OF DOCTORATES IN GERMANY

Funding of doctorates



## CHALLENGES RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMMES

Challenges due to

- different regulation by national standards
  - different higher education systems
  - **different goals of involved parties (individual motivation vs. institutional policies vs. national/EU/international agenda setting)**
- 
- Doctoral education landscape in Europe is highly diverse and heterogeneous!
  - Challenges affect not only the institutional, but also the individual level (i.e. challenges for doctoral supervisors)!

## WHY MOBILITY AT DOCTORAL LEVEL? THE INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE

For **scientific work** as part of the doctoral project, e.g.

- Research trips
- Experiments

For **qualification** reasons, e.g.

- Learning of method skills
- Learning / improving language skills
- Gaining teaching qualifications

For **academic exchange**

- Conferences, Summer Schools

## WHY MOBILITY AT DOCTORAL LEVEL? THE INSTITUTIONAL POLICY PERSPECTIVE

- Strengthening strategic partnerships
- Building on existing academic / scientific collaboration
- Sometimes budgetary incentives
- Branding, reputation, visible internationalisation strategy

### Funding programmes with agenda setting

- National funding incentives with respect to capacity building, brain gain, international collaboration etc.
  - Fellowships within Sandwich PhD programme (e.g. Brazil)
  - Scholarships for participating in a PhD programme abroad (e.g. CSC grants by the Chinese Scholarship Council)
  - Visiting researchers programmes for the initiation of collaboration (e.g. TWAS-DFG cooperation visits in Germany for postdoctoral researchers from sub-Saharan Africa, DFG Initiation of International Collaboration programme)
- Innovative doctoral training (made by EU) incorporates the triple “i” approach: International, intersectoral, interdisciplinary
  - Example: ITNs within the EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

## CHALLENGES RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMMES

Challenges due to

- different regulation by national standards
  - different higher education systems
  - different goals of involved parties (individual motivation vs. institutional policies vs. national/EU/international agenda setting)
- 
- Doctoral education landscape in Europe is highly diverse and heterogeneous!
  - **Challenges affect not only the institutional, but also the individual level (i.e. challenges for doctoral supervisors)!**

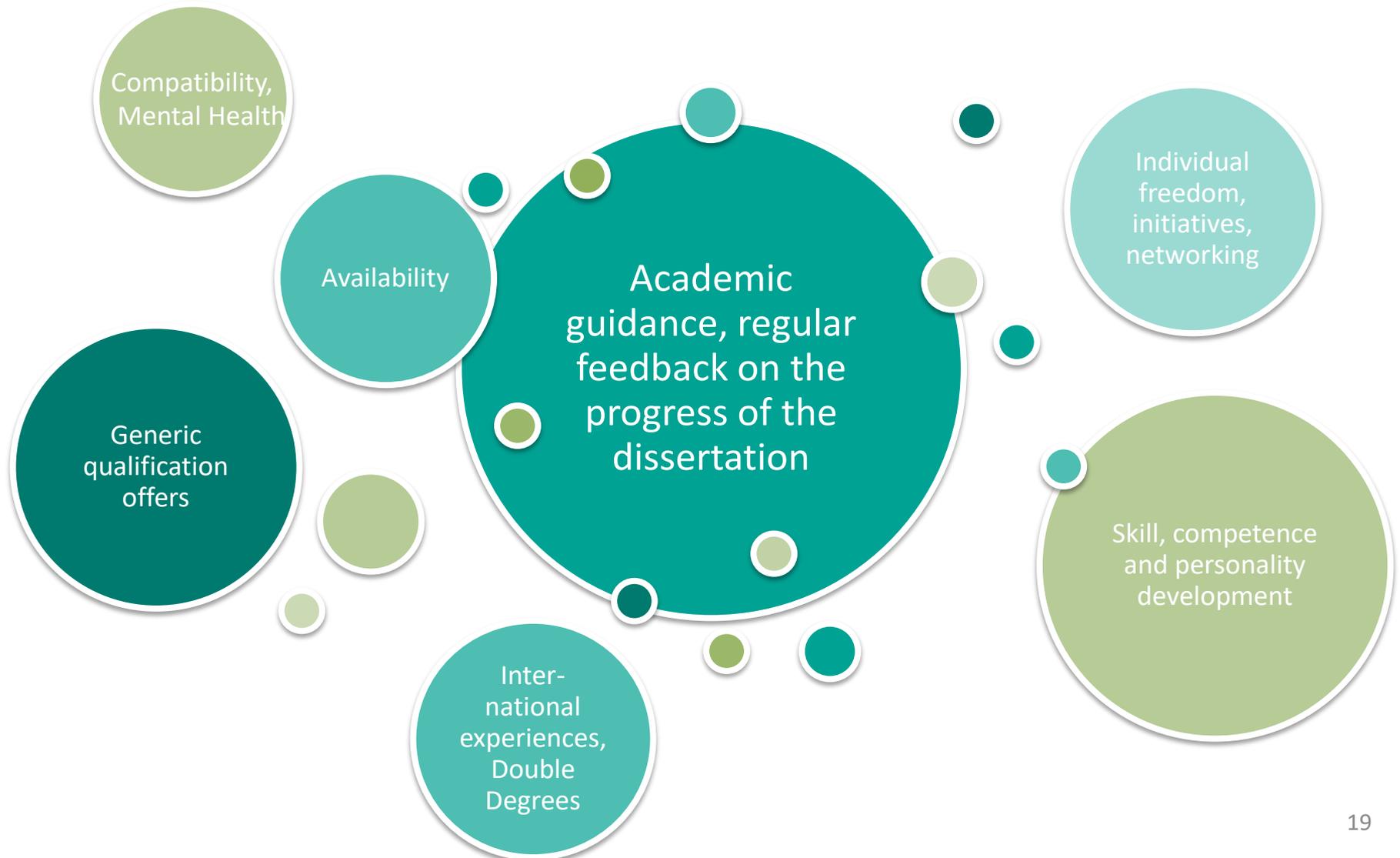
# International Mobility

National system differences influence expectations with respect to supervision

Language & intercultural communication

Extra-professional care needs

## INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGES: GOOD DOCTORAL SUPERVISION



Structures, workflows, templates

# **INSTRUMENTS TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES**



# CO-SUPERVISION TEMPLATE COIMBRA GROUP



The present template is a non-binding recommendation to Coimbra Group Universities. Each co-tutelle or joint degree agreement should be based on an individual agreement based on the rules and regulations for doctoral education of two specific universities.

**Agreement  
for joint supervision of doctoral studies  
leading to the award of a  
joint or a dual  
doctoral degree**

between

[UNIVERSITY 1]

and

[UNIVERSITY 2]

Article 1 – Purpose

In furtherance of the common aim of stimulating scientific cooperation and promoting the mobility of researchers, this agreement sets out the framework for co-supervision of the doctoral studies of:

Doctoral candidate: [Name of doctoral candidate])  
(hereafter referred to as “the doctoral candidate”)

at the University<sup>1</sup> of [University 1]

and the University of [University 2]

leading to the award of the degree of [Specify title of expected award]

The title of the doctoral candidate's research project is: [Specify title of the research project]

<sup>1</sup> The term 'university' denotes any university or institution which has the power to award doctoral degrees according to current national legislation.

- Article 1: Purpose
- Article 2: Application of national legislation and university regulations
- Article 3: Commencement and duration of doctoral studies
- Article 4: Distribution of work time
- Article 5: Registration and registration fees
- Article 6: Social security and insurance cover
- Article 7: Co-supervisors of doctoral studies
- Article 8: Exchange of information
- Article 9: Requirement for satisfactory progress
- Article 10: Presentation of the doctoral dissertation
- Article 11: Language
- Article 12: Assessment of the doctoral dissertation
- Article 13: Award of the doctoral degree
- Article 14: Entry into effect and termination



## CO-SUPERVISION TEMPLATE COIMBRA GROUP INCLUDES COMMENTS

- Article 1: Purpose

*Comments:*

*Regarding specific national regulations, it could be necessary to specify the term 'joint degree' and the university which awards the degree and/or issues the diploma.*

*One of the two universities can also be the "lead" university responsible for administrative processes, also with regard to the question of registration and tuition fees.*

- Article 2: Application of national legislation and university regulations

*Comment:*

*In case of a joint doctoral degree programme, the assessment and admission criteria should be clarified in a more detailed way.*

*Questions regarding Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) should be clarified if needed.*

## EXAMPLE: CO-TUTELLE WORKFLOW AT FSU

- Preparation of a work plan and time schedule by the doctoral candidate
- Supervision agreement with the University of Jena
- Admission as doctoral candidate at the respective Faculty
- First draft of the *Agreement for Joint Supervision* in cooperation with the Dean's Office of the Faculty
- Checking of the draft agreement (and, if necessary, drafting of the certificate) by the Dean's Office of the Faculty
- Compilation of appendices
- Coordination with the Legal Office
- If necessary, coordination with the Dean's Office
- 1. corrections of the partner university
- 1. corrections of the University of Jena (with consultation of the Dean's Office and the Legal Office)
- 2. corrections of the partner university
- 2. corrections of the University of Jena (if necessary, with consultation of the Dean's Office and the Legal Office)
- Authorisation of the agreement by the Legal Office
- Signing of the agreement by the partner university
- Signing of the agreement by the University of Jena

## EXAMPLE: CO-TUTELLE WORKFLOW AT FSU

- Preparation of a work plan and time schedule by the doctoral candidate
- Supervision agreement with the University of Jena
- Admission as doctoral candidate at the respective Faculty
- First draft of the *Agreement for Joint Supervision* in cooperation with the Dean's Office of the Faculty
- Checking of the draft agreement (and, if necessary, drafting of the certificate) by the Dean's Office of the Faculty
- Communication with the partner university
- Coordination with the partner university
- If necessary, coordination with the Dean's Office
- 1. corrections of the partner university
- 1. corrections of the University of Jena (with consultation of the Dean's Office and the Legal Office)
- 2. corrections of the partner university
- 2. corrections of the University of Jena (if necessary, with consultation of the Dean's Office and the Legal Office)
- Authorisation of the agreement by the Legal Office
- Signing of the agreement by the partner university
- Signing of the agreement by the University of Jena

**Initiation takes TIME!**

# EXAMPLE: CO-TUTELLE TEMPLATE JENA JOINT DEGREE

<p>FRIEDRICH-SCHILLER-UNIVERSITÄT JENA</p>		<p>Name of the Partner University</p>	<p>Emblem of the Partner University</p>
<p>seit 1558</p>			
<p>Die Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena durch die _____ Fakultät und die _____ Universität durch die _____ Fakultät/ das Graduierten Kolleg</p>		<p>Friedrich Schiller University, Jena School of _____ University of _____ School of _____ / the Graduate College _____</p>	
<p>verleihen gemeinsam</p>			<p>together award</p>
<p>Frau/ Herrn</p>			<p>Ms. / Mr.</p>
<p>Vorname Nachname (first name last name)</p>			
<p>geboren am DATUM in ORT</p>		<p>date of birth _____ in _____ (location)</p>	
<p>den akademischen Grad eines</p>		<p>the academic degree of</p>	
<p>“ Doctor _____ “</p>		<p>“ Doctor _____ “</p>	
<p>- Dr. _____ -</p>		<p>- Dr. _____ -</p>	
<p>im Rahmen eines gemeinsamen Promotionsverfahren („Cotutelle“), nachdem sie in einem ordnungsgemäßen Promotionsverfahren mit der von (Name Betreuer 1) und (Name Betreuer 2) betreuten Dissertation:</p>		<p>within the framework of a bi-national doctoral programme („Cotutelle“), following her / his completion of a graduate course of study and writing of a dissertation approved by her / his committee members (name of 1st committee member) and (name of 2nd committee member):</p>	
<p>Titel / title</p>			
<p>(Prädikat: _____)</p>		<p>(Grade: _____)</p>	
<p>sowie in einer mündlichen Prüfung ihre/ seine wissenschaftliche Befähigung erwiesen und dabei das folgende Gesamtprädikat erhalten hat:</p>		<p>as well as passing an oral examination thus verifying her / his academic skills. The overall grade for these achievements is:</p>	
<p>“ _____ cum laude “</p>			
<p>Jena, den ...</p>		<p>Location, Date</p>	
<p>Der Rektor</p>		<p>Rector</p>	
<p>Der Dekan</p>		<p>Dean</p>	
<p><small>(Frau/ Herr/ Name Nachname hat das Recht, den Doktorgrad entweder in der deutschen oder in der _____ Form zu führen. Ms. / Mr. first name last name may use this degree in its German form or as _____.)</small></p>			

## ALTERNATIVES TO CO-TUTELLE AGREEMENTS?

- From case-by-case agreements to joint PhD programmes for a higher number of doctoral candidates (and possibly several cohorts)
- Key features:
  - Cooperation agreement
  - Admission and supervision concept (see template)
  - Funding
  - Success factor: scientific coordination at each university for facilitating transnational communication and for managing the programme

Recommendations of other university networks

# LESSONS LEARNT?

# BEST PRACTICES IN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS (RESULTS FROM THE 2019 NSF WORKSHOP)

## Student Outcomes from international research experiences

Personal development

Adaptability and resilience

Global preparedness

Critical thinking

Network and collaboration

Intercultural competencies

Understanding of cultural variations to research

Trust-building/empathy with local entities

## Benefits to the research advisor from student international experiences

Increased productivity

Improved research networks

Input to promotion and tenure

Funding, e.g. add-ons to existing grants

Community building and collaboration across institutions

Encourages broader conversations with student

**International cooperation of several institutions entitled to award the doctorate** need special measures for quality assurance:

1. **Outgoing:** provisions for **intercultural preparation** of the visit abroad have proven very beneficial.
2. **Incoming: The integration of doctoral candidates** from other teaching and learning cultures must, in addition to the preparatory phase of the doctoral program, also ensure that the **research can be initiated promptly** on arrival. Publication of the results, (joint) use of the results and intellectual property rights must be regulated and guaranteed in compliance with patent law and data protection.
3. An **international doctoral committee** at the German university may be helpful for examining the standard of the respective foreign partner university (as is already the case for short term student exchanges).
4. Uniform **contractual regulations** of the requirements of the foreign university for awarding grades or the provision of and additional German certificate or academic transcript, as well as the possibility to withdraw a title (for instance if the title was revoked at one of the partner universities). The distribution of tasks (assessment and supervision) is also to be recorded in the contract.
5. **Other helpful tools:** Guidelines and procedural principles, coordinator of Cotutelle procedures, welcome service/offices (tutors, offices, structures), joint admissions board, joint supervision agreement, joint doctoral committee, best practice networks.

**International cooperation of several institutions entitled to award the doctorate** need special measures for quality assurance:

1. **Outgoing:** provisions for **intercultural preparation** of the visit abroad have proven very beneficial.
2. **Incoming: The integration of doctoral candidates** from other teaching and learning cultures must, in addition to the preparatory phase of the doctoral program, also ensure that the **research can be initiated promptly** on arrival. Publication of the results, (joint) use of the results and intellectual property rights.
3. An **international** **Best practice exchange:** Fixed scholarship amounts may lose value due to inflation. This should be taken into account in the standard of the (joint) exchanges). calculation of funds for the entire duration of the PhD phase. Doctoral candidates should be guaranteed that they can finish their doctorate with sufficient income.
4. Uniform **contract** the provision of the withdrawal a title (for instance if the title was revoked at one of the partner universities). The distribution of tasks (assessment and supervision) is also to be recorded in the contract.
5. **Other helpful tools:** Guidelines and procedural principles, coordinator of Cotutelle procedures, welcome service/offices (tutors, offices, structures), joint admissions board, joint supervision agreement, joint doctoral committee, best practice networks.

A „one size fits all“ approach will not work  
- neither within Europe nor beyond.

But:

- Provision of model contracts can simplify procedures.
- Individual agreements should be negotiated in Year 1 of the PhD.
- Admission to international collaborative programmes is possible as soon as the agreements are in place.
- Key success factor: Communication!

# COIMBRA GROUP DOCTORAL STUDIES WORKING GROUP

???

What is the value added of a joint diploma? Rather leave the degree out of academic collaborations

A double degree with two diplomas is easier to realise than one single document.

A cooperative doctorate resulting in a binational degree may allow for easier entry into international career paths.

A „model agreement“ does not make sense. Only case-by-case agreements are possible.

But: A „model agreement“ helps not to forget to discuss all aspects of possible conflict.