

Collaborative Doctoral Degree Programmes Policy

(Agreed and adopted at the Academic Council Meeting of 14th March 2022)

In January 2020, the IUA published [*Irish Universities Guidelines for Establishing Collaborative Research Degree Programmes*](#). These were guidelines were discussed and adopted for Maynooth University at a meeting of Academic Council on 14th March 2022.

This means that collaborative doctoral degree programmes will be sanctioned by the university *if* they meet one (or more) of three criteria which are outlined [below](#). If a department wishes to establish a joint doctoral supervision arrangement that does not align with these principles, please click [here](#).

Principles for establishing collaborative doctoral degree programmes.

Maynooth University will sanction the development of collaborative research degree programmes with reputable HEIs when at least one of the following criteria have been met.

- I. The proposed Collaborative Research Degree Programme aligns with the strategic plan of the university. This criterion is especially important.
- II. The proposed Collaborative Research Degree Programme is linked to a funding call.
- III. A department/school/institute provides evidence that collaboration with the partner institution will be linked to a cohort of no fewer than five students and is likely to lead to additional integrated programmes (i.e. there is a clear strategic benefit for the department/school/institute). Each institution may impose a higher threshold of students required to develop a Collaborative Research Degree Programme.

These above principles do not apply to the following.

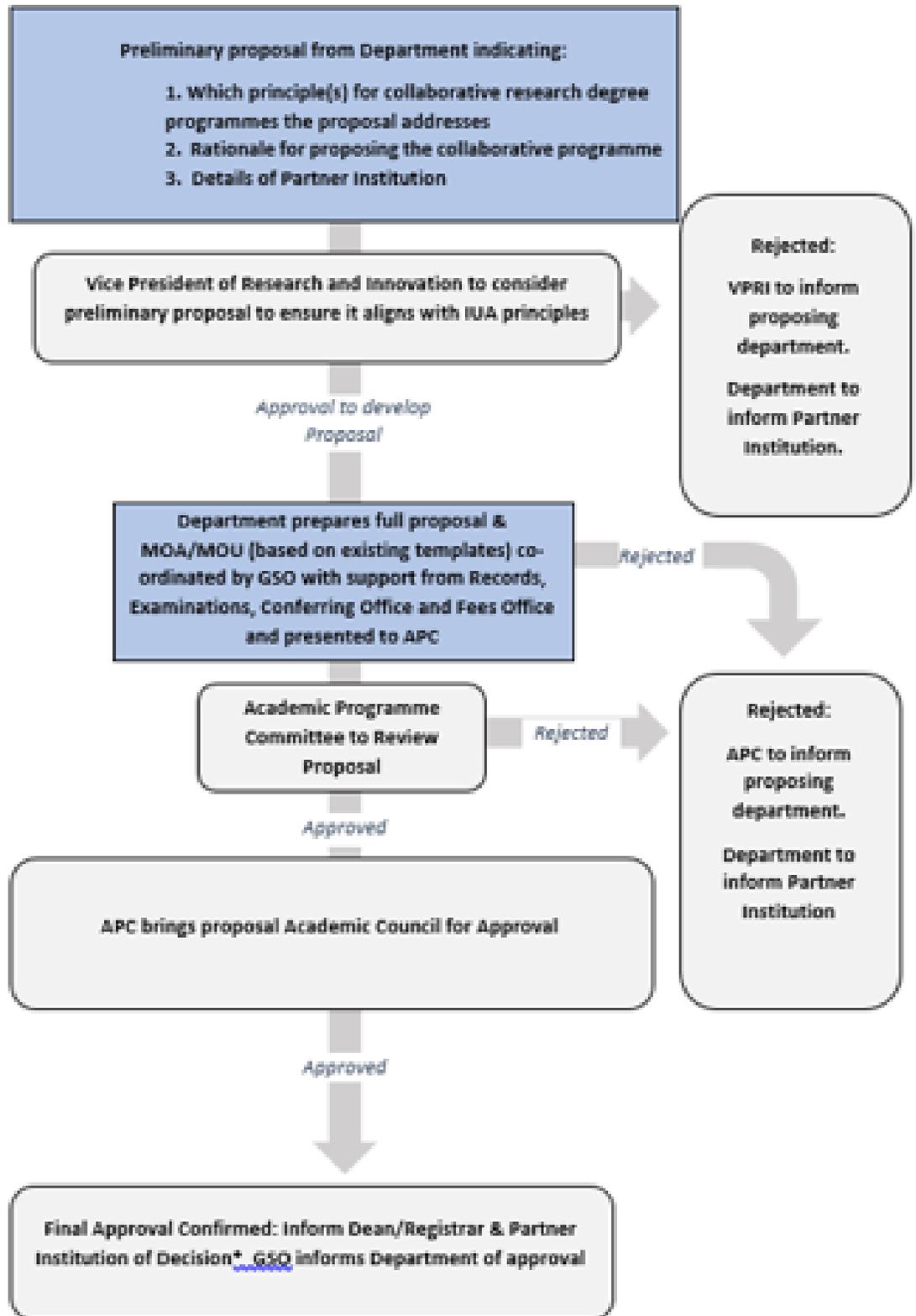
- Inter-institutional co-supervision arrangements for a single research student, whether this is a stand-alone cotutelle agreement or an arrangement under a specific overarching collaborative agreement such as the Marie Skłodowska Curie European Joint Doctorate Programme;
- Co-supervisory arrangements where the research student has their principal supervisor in their home university and has a co-supervisor in another HEI. In this case, the student will be conferred with a single award from the home

university and the external co-supervision can be captured on the student record.

Approval process for establishing collaborative doctoral degree programmes.

The process for applying for approval to establish a collaborative doctoral or research degree programme is outlined below.

1. **Preliminary proposal:** The Head of Department writes to the Vice-President of Research & Innovation with an outline of the proposed collaborative programme. This should include a clear outline of the following
 - a. Which of the three principles for collaborative research degree programmes the proposal addresses.
 - b. The rationale for proposing the collaborative programme
 - c. Details of the partner institution.
2. **Full proposal:** The Vice-President of Research & Innovation reviews the proposal. If rejected the Vice-President of Research & Innovation will inform the proposing department, who in turn will inform their partner institution. If approved the VPRI will invite the department to prepare (1) a full proposal and (2) a draft MOU/MOA based on existing templates (see appendix). GSO will co-ordinate the development of the full proposal with support from the Records, Examinations, Conferring, Fees Offices and present it to the Academic Programmes Committee for review.
3. **Communication of outcomes:** If rejected the Academic Programmes Committee will inform the proposing department. The proposing department will inform their partner institution. If accepted the Academic Programmes Committee will bring the proposal to Academic Council for approval.
4. If approved, the Dean of Graduate Studies to inform the Department and Partner Institution of Decision. When this is a collaborative research programme based on the research funding criterion, the Research Development Office will co-ordinate the signing of the joint MOU/MOA. Otherwise, the Graduate Studies Office will co-ordinate the signing of the joint MOU/MOA.



* When this is a collaborative programme based on research funding criterion, RDO coordinates signatures for MOA/MOU. GSO co-ordinates for other two criteria (alignment with university's strategy or evidence of 3 or more students per collaboration).

Principles for establishing collaborative doctoral degree programmes which do not meet the above the criteria.

Inter-institutional co-supervision arrangements for single research students are extremely labour-intensive and time-consuming to organize. If a Department, School or Research Institute wishes to put a collaborative arrangement in place for a single research student which does not meet any of the three criteria above, they can do so on the basis that they understand and agree to the following.

1. Students cannot register as doctoral students and supervision will not commence until Institutional MOUs or MOAs are completed and signed by both institutions.
2. Academic departments agree to lead the co-ordination of MOUs/MOAs (in collaboration with either GSO or RDO as appropriate).

Please click [here](#) for a template MOU/MOA.

