

# A guide for Joint Doctorates\* between France and the Netherlands

*\*(cotutelles de thèses)*

FRANS-NEDERLANDSE ACADEMIE  
RÉSEAU FRANCO-NÉERLANDAIS  
JUNE 2013



frans | nederlandse academie  
réseau franco | néerlandais

# Table of contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	3
1.1 Réseau franco-néerlandais / Frans-Nederlandse Academie (French-Dutch University Network) .....	4
1.2 Who does this guide address to? .....	4
1.3 How to use this guide? .....	4
1.4 Why a joint doctorate? .....	5
1.4.1 Why a joint PhD instead of a joint supervision? .....	5
1.5 How to organize a joint PhD? .....	6
1.6 General aspects of French and Dutch systems on doctorate level .....	7
1.6.1 Organization of doctoral programmes in France .....	7
1.6.2 Obtain a university position in France .....	8
1.6.3 Organization of doctoral programmes in The Netherlands .....	8
1.7 Legislation on Joint PhD's in France and the Netherlands .....	9
1.8 Terminology .....	10
<b>2. Comparison of various aspects of a joint programme at doctorate level</b> .....	11
Number of years and procedure .....	12
Financial aspects and status of doctoral candidate .....	13
Obligations for the doctoral candidate .....	14
Obligations for supervisors .....	15
Mobility .....	16
Defense and jury .....	17
Diploma .....	18
Languages .....	18
Contract .....	18
Social security (Health insurance) / Taxes .....	19
Intellectual property .....	19
Quality assurance .....	19
List of experts .....	20
Links to relevant organisations .....	21

# 1.

# Introduction

We have listed in this document on joint PhD programmes between France and the Netherlands the most salient points of negotiation and discussion between both parties. Background information is also included so that administrators, supervisors and PhD candidates can better understand the respective country's situation and to shed light on why some aspects may not be easily managed. We hope to limit back and forth negotiations required to come to an agreement on joint doctoral programmes.

This guide has been developed with the expertise of the RFN/FNA team, together with the input of experts from both countries, who have participated in meetings we organized in Brussels and Paris during the last two years. We would like to thank them all for their contributions to the realization of this document (see list below).

---

### 1.1 RÉSEAU FRANCO-NÉERLANDAIS / FRANS-NEDERLANDSE ACADEMIE (FRENCH-DUTCH UNIVERSITY NETWORK)

The French-Dutch University Network is an organization for bilateral university cooperation, created in 2000 on the initiative of the French and Dutch governments. The RFN/FNA promotes cooperation between institutions for higher education and research in both countries, in order to help build the European Higher Education and Research Area. The RFN/FNA provides information and gives advice, organizes exchanges, seminars and study visits, and contributes to the exchange of both knowledge and practice.

---

### 1.2 WHO DOES THIS GUIDE ADDRESS TO?

#### **Administrative staff of universities and research units**

Administrative staff in international relations or research laboratories who assist candidates and researchers with setting up joint programmes in France, The Netherlands, or a third partner country can use this guide as a checklist of points to cover in their own institution as well as a quick overview of the rules and regulations of the partner organization.

#### **Joint PhD candidates and supervisors**

Both PhD candidates and their supervisors engaged in a joint PhD can use this guide as a start document to cover all main points that have to be discussed and then included within the agreement signed by both parties. Remarks and advices pointed out by doctoral candidates themselves still involved in a joint PhD programme between France and the Netherlands have been integrated into this guide. Input from these young PhD researchers was mainly dedicated to illustrate and simplify the various steps that future PhD candidates have to follow to set up a Joint degree contract.

---

### 1.3 HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE?

The guide compiles the outcomes of several expert workgroups and gives a general overview of regulations and general habits as regarding the setting up of Joint PhD degrees. Each university, faculty or research center uses its own package of rules. The guide aims is to serve as a first approach, to remind both involved partner institutions, which issues need to be solved. Examples of solutions are mentioned, some are general, others are more specific and can not always be applied in any situation.

This guide has no legal value. Every aspect of legislation mentioned needs to be checked with the partner institution. The guide is made to facilitate, accelerate and accompany procedures, not to replace them.

Rules and regulations in both countries will probably change over time. This guide operates as a status quo at the date of printing, it can and hopefully will be nourished by the experiences and expertise of administrators, supervisors and PhD candidates themselves; it will therefore evolve over time, as a progressively fine-tuned and updated common result of its users.

---

## 1.4 WHY A JOINT DOCTORATE?

### **Benefits for the PhD candidate**

The main advantages of a joint PhD are for the doctoral candidates themselves. Candidates will operate in two countries, thus learn how to conduct research in two different settings. They will work in an enlarged international environment, build their own international network and will develop linguistic, social and intercultural skills to improve their position on the international labor market.

### **Benefits for the supervisors**

A joint PhD programme reinforces cooperation in research with the partner university or research group through joint supervision of a PhD candidate. It generates more possibilities to obtain European research grants.

It can also become the starting point for multiple collaborations such as an Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate.

### **Benefits for the doctoral school, the university**

A joint PhD programme increases the attractiveness of doctoral programmes for young mobile candidates through enhancement of their career perspectives. It accentuates the already (or not yet) internationally oriented research environment of the institution, through developing narrow contacts with the partner country. It offers opportunities to join European programmes.

### 1.4.1 Why a joint PhD instead of a joint supervision?

A joint PhD dissertation (Cotutelle) causes more hassle for the institutions but also provides real advantages:

- The PhD candidate in a 'cotutelle' has a recognized status in both universities, which therefore reinforces in both countries his chances to obtain good career opportunities in research. A joint supervision that does not lead to a degree in both countries is not giving the appropriate recognition to the PhD candidate's work in both countries.
- Cotutelle contracts that lead to a degree in both countries can be a way for universities to profile their institution, attract strong PhD candidates and reinforce research cooperation with specific partners.

## Main differences between both types:

	MOBILITY	ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION	DEFENSE	LANGUAGE OF DISSERTATION	DEGREE AWARDED
<b>International joint dissertation supervision (Cotutelle)</b>	1 national research unit and 1 abroad	2 universities	At 1 of the 2 universities	Language defined by the agreement, French abstract	Either a single doctoral degree conferred jointly by the 2 institutions (joint degree) Or 2 separate degrees, 1 from each institution (dual degree program)
<b>Joint supervision (Co-direction)</b>	At least one research institute	1 university	At 1 of the 2 universities	Usually in the national language (in France, French), or in English	1 national PhD degree only

(Source Campus France, slightly adapted)

The French Assembly of University Presidents (*Conférence des Présidents d'Université*) has decided that French universities can attribute a 'European label' to a doctoral programme if it includes a mobility period of at least 3 months in another European country. This EU label will then be mentioned on the degree of the doctoral candidate.

## 1.5 HOW TO ORGANIZE A JOINT PHD?

A joint doctorate is based on an agreement between two or more institutions for higher education. Either, there is already a research cooperation, or the candidate initiates the cotutelle based on a particular research subject and can create new research cooperations.

Each institution has national legislation and university rules to respect when it comes to doctoral programmes and degrees. Therefore, a phase of negotiation is necessary to define the exact content of the agreement. It is important to remind that legislation always offer possibilities to be flexible in their interpretation. University rules can be negotiated if an interesting counterpart is offered. Flexibility of all involved institutions and confidence in another's integrity have been proven to be the real keys for success in organizing a joint PhD.

The agreement should, apart from the respect of legislations and internal rules, be of real value for the PhD candidate, by defining his or her exact status, rights, obligations, mobility periods and working conditions.

This document offers a rapid overview of legislation and habits around doctoral programmes and candidate status in France and Netherlands, therefore helping institutions to find out more rapidly what terms need to be negotiated in priority.

Often universities have templates for the contract. If the partners do not agree on a single common document, a basic contract will be signed together with a personal development agreement signed by both supervisors and candidate.

---

## 1.6 GENERAL ASPECTS OF FRENCH AND DUTCH SYSTEMS ON DOCTORATE LEVEL

### 1.6.1 Organization of doctoral programmes in France

In France, doctoral departments (écoles doctorales) offer doctoral-level programmes. Each PhD candidate joins a research team or unit (EA, UMR, UPR...) affiliated to a specific Doctoral Department. Candidates are guided and supervised by a thesis supervisor. The Doctoral Departments at each higher education institution represent multiple research teams from one or more institutions. There are about 290 doctoral departments in France (Overview: see Links). Each department is organized around a specific theme. The departments are responsible not only for training doctoral students but also for preparing them for research careers by offering them a scholarly setting in which to work and learn. Through education, seminars, and internships, candidates are introduced to a range of career opportunities in various settings, including academia, government, and industry. The departments fulfil an essential coordinating role, ensuring the scientific coherence of candidates' research projects. Doctoral Departments may, and often do, combine their efforts, often within a higher education research cluster or research network. The research networks may exist at the national, binational, or international level.

Doctoral Departments are accredited by France's Ministry of higher education following an assessment by the national agency for the evaluation of research and higher education (AERES).

#### Functions of the Doctoral Departments:

- **Recruitment:** determine the recruitment policy based on explicit and publicly accessible criteria and organize the recruitments of doctoral candidates for the contracts that are under their supervision, i.e. the doctoral contracts.
- **Quality:** assure the quality of the guidance of doctoral candidates by the research units and teams, apply the thesis charter and make sure it is well applied. Create optimal conditions for candidates to prepare and defend their thesis.
- **Exchange:** organize scientific and academic exchanges between candidates.
- **Education:** offer courses that are useful for the candidate's research and professional project and for the development of a broad academic culture. They can be organized together with other public or private institutes.
- **Career development:** offer support for the candidates to prepare a career in the public or the private sector; organize a follow-up of the career development of the doctors and more generally of all candidates that have been in the department.
- **International cooperation:** develop a European and international environment, through cooperation programmes with foreign institutions for higher education or research centers, in particular by promoting the international doctorate (cotutelle internationale de thèse).

(Source : Arrêté du 7 août 2006 relatif à la formation doctorale, article 4)

**Doctoral contracts:** this contract system is open to all doctoral degree candidates. Available for a period of 3 years, the contracts carry medical insurance and other social benefits in addition to a stipend. Contracts are awarded and administered by Doctoral Departments at the nation's higher education and research institutions. Contract terms are uniform from one institution to another. Doctoral contracts are true employment contracts to the extent that they are enforceable by law and carry all of the benefits attached to such contracts under French law. In addition to the research contract funded by the French Ministry of Higher Education and awarded by the Doctoral Departments, there exist several other financing schemes, such as bilateral funds and scholarships awarded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and research grants offered by individual research laboratories, France's regional governments, and industry (under the CIFRE program, for example), as well as funds provided by the candidate's home country or institution.

CIFRE grants enable doctoral candidates to prepare their dissertation within an industrial company, in cooperation with an external academic research team. The company and the candidate enter into a three-year work contract, under which the company pays the candidate a monthly net stipend of approximately 1,950 euros. Candidates wishing to obtain a CIFRE grant must apply, with their Doctoral Department, to the national association for technical research (ANRT, *association nationale de la recherche technique*, <http://www.anrt.asso.fr>).

The Conseil National des Universités needs to qualify (procedure de “qualification”) a doctor in order for him/her to be able to apply for university positions (by the appropriate section of the CNU, which comes together once a year).

[https://www.galaxie.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/ensup/cand\\_qualification.htm](https://www.galaxie.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/ensup/cand_qualification.htm)

## 1.6.2 Organization of doctoral programmes in The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, research schools and graduate schools co-exist. They can both be responsible for the doctoral training.

A large number of the PhD programs in the Netherlands are part of a national research school.

Research schools exist since the 1990's and fulfil two primary tasks: research coordination as well as support and training of the PhD candidates. Research schools are mainly organized around research themes. Often inter-university builded organizations offer domain-specific courses to the PhD candidates, facilitating knowledge exchange and providing an external supervisor who can mediate in case of problems during the PhD program. Moreover, these schools are ideally suited to provide potential candidates with an overview of the options within the Dutch academic world, enabling young talents to choose a PhD topic and supervisor. An important task of the research school is the organization of seminars, conferences and short courses or modules such as summer schools.

The research schools in the Netherlands have been reviewed by the Research School Accreditation Committee (ECOS) of the KNAW every six years since 1992. An overview of the national research schools in the Netherlands can be found on the website of the KNAW.

Since 2004, graduate schools have been formally created in the Netherlands. However, their form and functions still very much vary among institutions.

### *Different forms co-exist:*

- Local research schools are graduate schools
- Research institutes are the basis of the graduate schools: in this case, the functions of the graduate school are fulfilled by the institutes
- University graduate schools: on university level, a graduate division is established, or at least a person is responsible for graduate schools. On faculty level separate graduate schools are formed, sometimes for several faculties and are organized by research theme.



### Functions of research schools and graduate schools:

Inter-university research schools and graduate schools have the same type of functions:

- **Environment:** offer an environment in which doctoral candidates can be in touch with a large number of other doctoral candidates.
- **Quality:** create an organisation that is specifically responsible for quality assurance, guidance and facilities (budget for conferences, for example) to doctoral candidates.
- **Efficiency:** bring together doctoral programmes with few candidates optimizes efficiency and can create a critical mass to keep the education at a good level.
- **International profiling.**

They are some differences between Dutch graduate and research schools. The research schools mainly coordinate the developed research themes while the graduate schools operate at different level of responsibilities to coordinate the doctoral programmes.

In the Netherlands, the research school or graduate school is not organized in a way that it is the only contact point of the PhD candidate, as is the case in France. These schools offer training and support, but do not always, for example, sign contracts or agreements, which is the proper role of the university services (human resource, legal or international offices...). The recruitment of the PhD candidates remains a task of the university, not that of the graduate and/or research schools. The PhD candidates are administratively embedded in the university or faculty of their subject. They often have their own office in the faculty itself and are considered as true employees, whose labour contract follows the [Collective Labour Agreement of the Dutch universities](#). Their gross monthly salary varies from 2,000 euro in the first year up to 2,600 euro in the fourth year.

For more recent developments: <http://www.nrc.nl/carriere/2013/04/24/rechter-beslist-dat-promovendi-met-beurs-niet-in-dienst-zijn/>.

---

## 1.7 LEGISLATION ON JOINT PHD'S IN FRANCE AND THE NETHERLANDS

The French Ministry for Higher Education and Research has decided in 2005 to facilitate the joint doctorate programmes by a special decree. Article 4 gives French institutions the possibility to deviate from their national rules in order to facilitate a 'cotutelle': "Whenever some rules applicable to doctoral studies in the countries involved are incompatible with each other, French institutions are allowed to depart from the provisions of the aforementioned Decree of April 25th 2002 on these particular aspects, in accordance with the provisions of the decree hereby and the conditions set by the agreement." (*Decree of January 6<sup>th</sup> 2005 on the international joint supervision of doctoral thesis, Article 4, translation of ANRT-Asso*). Further, the decree stipulates that an agreement should be made and which points it should include.

Since 1 July 2010, Dutch higher education institutions are allowed to offer joint degrees. The award of a joint degree is not limited to the successful completion of a full joint Bachelor's or Master's degree programme. It can also pertain to a part of the curriculum offered jointly, such as a specialisation or a specific track within a programme.

In collaboration with one or more foreign institutions, one or more Dutch institutions can intend to award a joint degree after successful completion of a new or existing joint programmes or award a joint degree after successful completion of a jointly offered curriculum within two or more existing joint programmes. The contribution of the Dutch institution(s) should be substantial enough to justify awarding a joint degree. ([http://nvaao.com/joint\\_degrees](http://nvaao.com/joint_degrees))

---

## 1.8 TERMINOLOGY

**Joint programme:** a programme offered jointly by different higher education institutions irrespectively of the degree (joint, multiple and double) awarded.

**Joint degree :** a recognised degree awarded by higher education institutions that offer the joint programme, attesting the successful completion of this joint programme. It is a single document nationally acknowledged as the recognised award of the joint programme and signed by the competent authorities (rectors, vice-chancellors...) of the institutions involved in the joint degree.

(<http://www.knaw.nl/Pages/DEF/27/259.bGFuZz1FTkc.html>)

**Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate (EMJD) :** a common doctoral programme may lead to an application for an Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate. The quality guidelines for the EMJD can also be applied to other joint doctorate programmes.

The primary aim of EMJDs is to develop structured and integrated co-operation in higher education, in order to design and implement common doctoral programmes that lead to the award of mutually recognised joint, double or multiple doctorate degrees.

Therefore, beyond the research activities themselves and the individuals involved, the institutions have to be seen as the key target of the Programme. They are expected to contribute to the promotion of innovative models for the modernisation of doctoral studies, focusing on institutional cooperation and the development of joint governance models (i.e. recruitment, supervision, assessment, awarding of degrees and fee policy).

EMJDs are designed and implemented by consortia of HEIs and socio-economic partners from Europe and any other parts of the world. Enrolled doctoral candidates will receive high-quality training and carry out their research activities in at least two of the European countries represented in the consortium; after the successful completion of the programme, they will be awarded, on behalf of the consortium, a double, multiple or joint doctorate degree.

The minimum eligible consortium consists of three full partner HEIs entitled to deliver doctorate degrees, located in different European countries, at least one of which must be an EU Member State.

### An EMJD must:

- Be designed as a training and research programme that will be completed by the candidates within a maximum period of 4 years. Although the candidate must complete his/her doctoral activities within a maximum period of 4 years, the EMJD fellowship will cover a maximum period of 3 years;
- Include training/research periods in at least two of the European countries represented in the consortium. Each of these mobility periods must be instrumental to the fulfilment of the programme and last for at least six months (cumulative or consecutive);
- Offer “employment contracts” to their Erasmus Mundus fellowship holders except in adequately documented cases where national regulation would prohibit this possibility.

(Source: [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus\\_mundus/programme/programme\\_guide\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/programme/programme_guide_en.php))

2.

Comparison  
of various aspects  
of a joint  
programme at  
doctorate level

## 2. Comparison of various aspects of a joint programme at doctorate level

### NUMBER OF YEARS AND PROCEDURE

FRANCE	THE NETHERLANDS
<p>Access to doctoral studies is possible after completion of a two year degree at Master level (120 ECTS). The candidate needs to provide proof of aptitude for research (either through Research Master, or, in case of a Professional Master, other research papers/publications). Furthermore, the candidate needs to find an academic supervisor and a research subject within a laboratory or a research team.</p> <p>A French doctorate usually gets funding for <b>3 years</b>. Doctoral candidates in France receive a doctoral contract for three years. An additional year or two can only be obtained through a special dispensation from the doctoral school. Doctoral schools are partly assessed on graduation statistics, which might explain some reluctance to allow PhD candidates these extra year(s).</p> <p>No other funding from within the university can be added to those three years. Often, the maximum duration for part-time candidates is fixed at <b>7 years</b> (not possible in hard sciences).</p> <p>Doctoral candidates in France register each year at the university for a full university year (sept-august).</p> <p>Before it becomes official the doctoral contract should be approved by the PhD candidate's supervisor, the director of the doctoral school and finally by the President of the University.</p>	<p>Access to a doctoral programme as regulated by law, is possible after completion of a Master's degree (one or two years, 60 or 120 ECTS). Candidates who wish to pursue doctoral studies apply to job openings for specific fields or subjects that are published in newspapers and specific websites.</p> <p>Since a few years, universities can also place doctoral candidates with external scholarships (e.g. Erasmus Mundus) or with substantial funding from their home university.</p> <p>In the Netherlands a doctorate usually takes <b>4 years</b> to complete (unwritten rule, but the expected outcomes are usually calibrated to 4 years). The candidates receive a contract for this period. This is generally considered to be the optimal period to write a good dissertation (unwritten rule). Due to European programmes, though, 3 years is sometimes accepted nowadays, depending on good research results obtained by the candidate and approval by the supervisor. No official time limit for completion exists.</p> <p>Important: Usually an average of 4-6 months is needed between approval of the reading committee and the official ceremony. Consequence is that the candidate may be entering a fifth 'year', while having already finished the thesis.</p> <p>Candidates without contracts (buitenpromovendi) can prepare a doctorate during an unlimited number of years in their own spare time. They submit their work for evaluation by a professor when they judge it as ready.</p>

### Advice for joint doctorate

A joint doctorate needs to meet the academic standards of both institutions involved. Beforehand, partners discuss and agree upon the academic outcome and carefully consider the required period of study. In general a doctoral student in France is given funding for three years to complete a doctoral thesis. In the Netherlands, candidates are expected to complete their doctoral work within four years. Even though no official regulation exists, candidates usually do not meet the requirement for a Dutch doctorate after only three years of doctoral studies (this highly depends however on field of studies and obtained results). In that case, the French scholarship is not sufficient to cover the whole period and additional funding is necessary. This point is closely related to the field of study and remains subject to discussion.

Some Dutch Universities offer the possibility for students to integrate a special Research Master's of which the second year is also the first year of the doctoral studies. The candidate then only needs three more years to finish the doctorate, and thus complies with French regulations.

#### Examples of real cases

- *"During his medical studies in the Netherlands, Roel took an additional MSc programme in Molecular Medicine. He was lucky to obtain interesting results during his 1-year laboratory rotation that served as a kick-start for his PhD research. A little less than 3 years later, Roel has published several papers. Therefore, his thesis directors from the laboratory of Pulmonary Medicine in Rotterdam and the Laboratory of Innate Immunity at the Institut Pasteur in Paris agreed that he would defend his thesis, even though he spent less than 3 years in the laboratory (Recently promoted doctor).*

- The first three years of the PhD project were financed by a grant from the French government, distributed via the graduate school of the French university. Financing of the last year of the project was covered by the Dutch partner. Travel costs and extra accommodation expenses were also paid by the Dutch research group. In total the PhD project is four years (Candidate in 4<sup>th</sup> year).
- The Dutch and French partner agreed on a PhD project of four years. It was not possible to include this duration in the joint thesis contract issued by the French university and signed by all partners. After three years, considerable effort was required to persuade the French university to allow inscription in the fourth year. After the jury receives the PhD thesis, in the Netherlands, considerable time (3-6 months) is required to make a reservation for the official defense ceremony, during which the diploma is awarded. If subscription to an additional year at the university is not an option, this 'lapse period' should be taken into consideration. Since PhD projects in the Netherlands can start any moment and this does not necessarily coincides with the onset of the academic year rhythm, this issue is complicated even further.

## FINANCIAL ASPECTS AND STATUS OF DOCTORAL CANDIDATE

FRANCE	THE NETHERLANDS
<p>The head/director of the doctoral school may verify that the doctoral candidate has sufficient income for the 3-year doctorate, whatever the sources of the income (decree of 7/8/2006 for doctoral education).</p> <p>Since 2009, some doctoral candidates are provided with a doctoral contract of a university or research institutes (CNRS, Inserm, INRA,...). In this case, doctoral candidates are considered employees of the university even though they still pay a student fee. The doctoral contract is concluded for a period of three years. An extra year can be allowed if exceptional circumstances exist.</p> <p>The salary of the doctoral contract is established by law between €1684,93 gross/month (research only) and €2024,70 gross/month (including other activities : such as teaching, consulting, dissemination or valorisation).</p> <p><b>DOCTORAL CANDIDATES MAY ALSO BE IN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FINANCIAL SITUATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Doctoral candidates obtain a grant from a firm (CIFRE : conventions industrielles de formation par la recherche.)</li> <li>▪ Doctoral candidates have a scholarship from the French Ministry of Higher Education.</li> <li>▪ Doctoral candidates have no institutional funding. In this case, they use their own resources.</li> </ul> <p>Every doctoral student still is required to pay a student fee of 380 euro a year and 207 euro for student social security provided by the university or proof of insurance.</p> <p>The university can charge a higher student fee for extra services (participation costs).</p> <p><u>Rule:</u> you cannot pay twice, alternative fees in France and Netherlands</p> <p><b>VARIOUS CASES:</b></p> <p>i) The student pays fees if she/he has no funding, if she/he has a doctoral contract or if she/he has a grant from a firm.</p> <p>ii) The student does not pay fees if she/he has a scholarship from the French Ministry of Higher education (based on social criteria)</p>	<p>A large number of doctoral candidates are fully employed at the university according to the collective agreement of Dutch research universities (VSNU).</p> <p>Doctoral candidates who apply for specific positions (all offered positions available on the Academic Transfer website) and who are accepted, receive a salary and working conditions as determined in the universities collective labour agreement (€2,042 gross/month based on a 38-hour work week, increasing to €2,612 gross/month in the fourth year, based on a 38-hour work week - 2012).</p> <p>Universities can offer to sign an agreement (not a contract of employment) between the supervisor, the doctoral candidate and the co-supervisor to precise a personal development plan for the candidate.</p> <p>Since a few years, universities can also place doctoral candidates with external scholarships (e.g. Erasmus Mundus). In that case they do not have the status of an employee. Besides, large numbers of doctoral candidates receive a substantial grant from their home university/home government.</p> <p>Tuition fees for doctoral studies do not exist. If a fee applies for doctoral education, the host institution pays for it or waives it. Bench fees may apply.</p> <p>At the moment, the government is evaluating the possibility of allowing universities to provide doctoral students with a university scholarship. This parallel system of appointments is presently under active discussion because representatives of doctoral candidates fear for their status as employees.</p>

## Advice for a joint doctorate

Currently, candidates will be primarily financed by the French or the Dutch university taking into account the information above about the number of years of funding needed. He/she travels to the other country. Most likely his/her position differs in both countries, for example a PhD-student employed by university (with a doctoral contract) in France and a visiting researcher in the Netherlands, or an employee in the Netherlands and a student without contract in France.

Ideally a joint programme should provide a joint contract, with one salary in one country and funded by both universities. Ideally the funding for the total planned research period is agreed upon before starting or at least in the first year.

During elaboration of the joint contract, both parties should therefore also look after the rights of the PhD. Most often benefits are automatically accorded from the advantages offered to doctoral students in the 'home' university. We recommend that contracts can and should provide access to advantages of both universities (classes, library access, sports and other facilities) in order to create equality between parties.

The Dutch university needs to provide a document certifying that you are a PhD candidate in Netherlands.

### Examples of real cases

- *“To share the expenses between both institutes, it was agreed that I will perceive payment under the conditions of the standard doctoral contracts of Strasbourg University during the first three years of my PhD; while during the fourth year, I will be paid under the conditions of a one-year work contract with Groningen University. In addition, both institutes contribute to my expenses, such as collaborations, conferences, during the full duration of my PhD.”* (Second-year PhD student between Strasbourg and Groningen)
- *Roel is in a joint PhD programme between the Erasmus University Rotterdam and the Université Paris-Diderot. Together with his supervisors, he established a plan in which he would regularly alternate between Rotterdam and Paris. Roel receives a 3-year scholarship from the Ligue Nationale Contre le Cancer (LNCC) in France. In addition, the laboratory in Rotterdam pays him an additional (full-time) PhD student salary for 3 months per year to cover the extra housing costs. Furthermore, Roel's two thesis directors agree to equally split the travel expenses.*

## OBLIGATIONS FOR THE DOCTORAL CANDIDATE

	FRANCE	THE NETHERLANDS
<b>Teaching courses</b>	<p>Teaching is never obligatory and remains optional.</p> <p>If the doctoral candidate is under 28 years old and does not have a doctoral contract, she/he may teach but will only be paid for the number of hours of teaching.</p> <p>If the candidate has a doctoral contract with teaching obligations as part of the required mission, the doctorate candidate receives a higher salary (cf. p.13) to teach 64 hours/year (decree 23 april 2009, article 5).</p> <p>If the doctoral candidate is ATER (<i>Attaché temporaire d'enseignement et de recherche</i>), she/he will have 91 or 192 hours of teaching per year.</p>	<p>Doctoral candidates in the past were obliged to teach classes for 10% of their programme. Nowadays, no strict regulations exist. There are various interpretations between universities and even faculties.</p> <p>Most candidates are involved in some teaching activities up to a maximum extent of 25%; in other cases (for example for scholarship PhD candidates) no teaching is required.</p> <p>PhD candidates do not receive a higher salary when they teach. The monthly salary for PhD candidates is fixed.</p>
<b>Doctoral education programmes</b>	<p>Courses in transversal skills are in principle obligatory for doctoral candidates. Exceptions can be made. It depends on the university: the doctoral school has the final word.</p>	<p>Courses or a certain number of ECTS-points to be obtained can be obligatory in some universities, but remain free of charge to the PhD. The board of PhD or an equivalent committee can decide to make an exception if obligatory courses cannot be followed (because the student is in France at that moment, for example).</p>
<b>Printing/publication of dissertation</b>	<p>Printing of dissertation before the defense in a few copies (one for each member of the jury plus some extra), standard format A4 recto only and binded.</p> <p>Publication of the thesis is possible after the defense.</p>	<p>The doctoral candidate must provide a number of copies of his dissertation. In addition, PhDs deliver a number of hard copies plus 1 digital copy to the University Library.</p> <p>Printing of the dissertation (at least 50 copies, average of 150 is more typical), (traditionally) in the form of a book with an ISBN code (formalized after defense). Although not formally required, this is in practice obligatory with the costs borne by the doctoral candidate. He/she may request a financial contribution from the university and/or from an external sponsor (but candidate still needs to save up when starting the thesis). These printed numbers might become less in the future due to digitalisation.</p> <p>After the defense, the thesis or its summary is also sent to several media outlets and publication is not uncommon.</p>
<b>Publication in journals</b>	<p>Depends on the research field and of the doctoral school. Check the internal documents of the doctoral school.</p>	<p>Depends on the field of study and of the doctoral school. Check the internal documents of the doctoral school. Usually at least 1 publication is required.</p>
<b>Declaration of the dissertation subject</b>	<p>Declaration of the subject has to be done to the ABES (Agence bibliographique de l'enseignement supérieur) that uses a specific software STEP (Signalement des Thèses En Préparation).</p> <p>→ 3 weeks before defense, printed or digital copy at the secretary office of the doctoral school.</p>	<p>The final thesis title is known about three months in advance, with signatures of supervisors at the <i>Board for Doctorates</i>. Usually, the thesis subject is known at the start of the PhD trajectory.</p>

### Advice for joint doctorate

When it comes to teaching, arrangements have to be made. Teaching experience is more common and more important for an academic career in the Netherlands since education and research are more intertwined. It would be fruitful for a Dutch candidate to also have this opportunity in France.

As for the courses the candidate has to follow, this has to be decided beforehand in the personalized contract. If there are similarities in both countries, the board of PhDs/doctoral school can provide arrangements. For the publication of the dissertation, a French candidate has to be aware of the procedure applied in the Netherlands, including both high costs and possibilities in funding, just as a Dutch candidate needs to be aware of the French procedure.

### Example from real case

*In Groningen we use a Training Supervision Plan which states the teaching obligations, the course obligations but also the research plan for the first year, the assessment moments of the PhD candidate and the frequency of meetings with the supervisor(s). This plan is updated every year during the assessment/evaluation meetings. This plan can also be used for joint doctorates.*

## OBLIGATIONS FOR SUPERVISORS

FRANCE	THE NETHERLANDS
Only researchers with the HDR (Habilitation à diriger des recherches) can be primary supervisors of doctoral students. Full professors (professeurs des universités) automatically possess the HDR title, but some Maîtres de conférences also possess and use this title.	Only full professors can be primary supervisor (promotor). Other re-searchers can be co-supervisors. In general, a PhD has two supervisors.

### Advice for joint doctorate

There needs to be one supervisor (with the proper authority) from each university.

Quality recommendation: the supervisors should meet at least once a year (absolute minimum) to discuss the work and progress of a doctoral candidate (see consortium agreements EMJD) and should also have yearly meetings with the PhD-student.

## MOBILITY

Mobility is the core element of a joint doctorate. A joint degree is NOT a delocalisation of the research; the core business is the mobility of the candidate and not only the supervisors. Candidates are part of two research groups, share a scientific environment and culture. This mobility, shared by both groups, has to be agreed upon and planned. The minimum stay at each university should be agreed upon and mentioned in the contract.



## DEFENSE AND JURY

Plan the defense mentioned in the agreement is an absolute obligation.

	FRANCE	THE NETHERLANDS
<b>Place of defense</b>	<p>No requirements. There has to be only one defense.</p> <p>The French university can award the doctorate title even if defense takes place in the Netherlands.</p>	<p>There has to be only one defense, but there can of course be multiple ceremonies.</p>
<b>Financial aspects</b>	<p>It has to be prepared by the supervisor and the director of the doctoral school. Some financial help from the doctoral school can then be envisaged (normally not concerning the edition/printing of the thesis) but only if planned in advance.</p>	<p>Dutch universities receive a substantial part of their basic funding on graduation statistics to cover all costs, including those of the jury and defense, but only once the doctorate is completed. The defense needs to take place in the Netherlands in order to receive these funds.</p> <p>It remains the choice of the Dutch university to require these funds or not, for example if there is a consortium of doctoral students (funds could then be shared).</p> <p>The candidate receives the doctorate and the diploma during the ceremony. It is possible to defend the thesis at a foreign institution. In that case, the Dutch university does not receive any funding.</p>
<b>Jury</b>	<p>Before the defense (viva voce examination), two 'rapporteurs' from a different institution, read the dissertation and give their evaluation as a 'go' or 'no go' signal for the defense.</p> <p>The head of the university where the defense takes place will decide to authorize or not the doctoral candidate to organize the ceremony only after having been given the decision of the director of the doctoral school.</p> <p>The supervisors may play an active part in the jury at the defense. They not only organize it but are also part of the jury. The jury is composed of 3 to 8 members.</p>	<p>Before the PhD candidate is admitted to the defense the dissertation is evaluated by an evaluation committee usually consisting of full professors from different institutions. Only if they approve of the dissertation (usually a majority vote) the candidate is allowed admission to the defense. The Doctoral Committee (or other name, appointed by the Board of Doctorates), present at the formal defense, primarily consists of persons who have the right to confer the doctorate degree at a Dutch university or equivalent foreign academic institution. The DC is composed of the supervisors and external experts. In order to ensure neutrality of the 'opposition', several members of the DC must not have been involved in the doctoral research project. Before the defense, the DC members prepare the examination, i.e. discussion with the candidate.</p> <p>At the actual defense ceremony, the supervisors only play a formal role.</p>
<b>Defense ceremony</b>	<p>Public. The candidate makes a 40-60 minute presentation of the thesis work and then is questioned 1 to 2 hours by the jury. Graduation result (pass, no pass) is determined during jury deliberation and depends partly on the defense. Different types of honours can be attributed: "Honorable", "très honorable", "très honorable avec félicitations du jury". Some universities only attribute one type of honours.</p> <p>Defense by videoconference is sometimes possible after special authorization and under certain conditions. Depends on the university regulations.</p>	<p>Presentation for the public.</p> <p>The defense is primarily an official ceremony involving the prestige of the university as well as the quality of the work presented by the candidate. The defense has to be well prepared for the questions posed by the opponents, members of the ceremonial jury that is chaired by the 'rector magnificus'.</p> <p>Propositions written by the PhD candidate can be part of the thesis and thesis defense.</p> <p>The DC confers the doctorate, on behalf of the Board for Doctorates. The ceremony is following a pre-established ritual. The duration of the ceremony is exactly 45 minutes and is ended by the beadle ('pedel') who pronounces the sentence <i>Hora Est!</i> or <i>Hora Finita!</i> Some universities do not attribute honours at all, while others use the only one possible: « cum laude »</p>

## Advice for joint doctorate

The place of the defense is a difficult point for the Dutch partner in light of the funding system. Theoretically, a defense somewhere else than in a Dutch research partner university is possible, but in that case the Dutch university will miss out on funds. For a defense in the Netherlands, the French university could consider negotiating to receive a part of the funding for the doctoral student, as a counterpart for the prestige of the ceremony. This would be especially the case if the doctoral contract was financed by the French partner.

Travel costs as well as fees for visa, costs of hosting and meals related to the defense ceremony should be taken into account, for the candidate, his supervisor(s) and other members of the jury.

It is once more very important to be aware of the necessity to discuss these matters long before the signature of the agreement: it is then possible to envisage the addition of a financial amendment to the cotutelle agreement to establish the repartition of the costs between the partner universities. To avoid excessive costs, it is even possible to organize a videoconference for a jury of high quality.

Supervisors, administrators and candidates should be aware of the differences between the two countries regarding the defense. The mixed jury or Doctoral Committee should be determined well ahead of time in order to provide a careful evaluation of the thesis.

---

## DIPLOMA

In the case of a joint degree, the French government only accepts a French format, printed on French official paper with proper watermark. Negotiation for acceptance by the Dutch university to accept such a document has to be agreed to in advance at the signature of the Joint agreement.

Strongly recommended: add a Joint Diploma Supplement, such as mentioned in the JOI.CON report.

In the Netherlands, it is not possible to attribute a diploma for a dissertation that has already been defended and accepted somewhere else. This is the reason why the Dutch diploma has to be issued first in the case of a double degree.

---

## LANGUAGES

FRANCE	THE NETHERLANDS
Contract needs to be in French, but are quite often additionally translated into English.  Depending on the research field, the dissertation can be in French or in another language. In such case, a substantial summary (this is the official term, and can sometimes mean 'of at least one page') in French has to be included.	The contract can be in English, or less common, in Dutch.  The dissertation is preferably written in English or in the language of the partner university. A Dutch summary is then mandatory.

---

## CONTRACT

Must indicate under which national law and in which language the contract is valid in case of a dispute. In case of EU funding, Belgian law applies.

---

## SOCIAL SECURITY (HEALTH INSURANCE) / TAXES

The candidate needs to make sure that he/she pays income and other taxes in the right places. Rules apply in each country for health insurance.

Each partner has to provide sufficient information about these issues.

FRANCE	THE NETHERLANDS
<p>A doctoral candidate can get a basic student public health insurance through the university (around 200 euros/year). If he/she has another type of insurance (outside university or in the Netherlands) the candidate needs to provide a document which proves this. Complementary insurance is called 'Mutuelle', which are private.</p> <p>More information on French social security and taxes on the website of the Fondation Kastler : <a href="http://www.fnak.fr">www.fnak.fr</a> or Cleiss <a href="http://www.cleiss.fr/docs/regimes/regime_france/an_index.html">http://www.cleiss.fr/docs/regimes/regime_france/an_index.html</a> (English)</p>	<p>If the candidate lives in the Netherlands he/she is obliged to have a Dutch health insurance. Nuffic has made a scheme that determines whether or not you have to take a Dutch insurance: <a href="http://www.studyin-holland.nl/practical-matters/insurance/healthcare-insurance">http://www.studyin-holland.nl/practical-matters/insurance/healthcare-insurance</a></p> <p>Dutch health insurances are offered by private companies but the content of the basic insurance package is determined by government. Cost of basic insurance: around 100 euro/month, including 350 euro of personal contribution.</p>

### Example from real case

Roel is in a joint PhD programme between the Erasmus University Rotterdam and the Université Paris-Diderot. He receives a salary both in France and in the Netherlands. Roel receives more than 25% of his total salary in the Netherlands and is therefore allowed to keep his health insurance in the Netherlands. Because he can show the EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) at the French University, he is not obliged to take the otherwise obligatory insurance in France. Every year, he declares taxes in both France and the Netherlands. Because of the agreements between France and the Netherlands, he is (partly) compensated for social security taxes in both countries.

---

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Needs to be in the contract. Who is recognized as legal owner of the outcomes of any intellectual property developed during the research carried out within a Joint degree contract? Can we talk about joint intellectual property or associate level on intellectual property? In case of positive results obtained during the common research programs mentioned in the cotutelle agreement or its appendices, the partners commit to a mutual agreement. The protection of the thesis subject, the publication, exploitation and protection of the results obtained during the common research programs mentioned in this agreement or its appendices must be provided in accordance with the specific procedures of each country involved in obtaining the said results. It is agreed that the partners will meet to negotiate specific agreements to resolve individual cases concerning intellectual property rights.

European Intellectual Property Rights helpdesk:  
<https://www.iprhelpdesk.eu/>

---

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

It is recommended to include a chapter on quality assurance of the doctoral education, or at least to exchange information between both institutions on this matter.

The document *Practical Approaches to the Management of the Joint Programmes* presents the results from the JOI.CON Training Project conducted from October 2011 until December 2012 with the support of the Life Long Learning Programme of the European Union.

# Have contributed to this document:

**Anne-Marie GALLIOU-SCANVION** – Co-director Law Dept and jurist, University of Brest Occidentale  
(former vice-president International relations)

**Ineke GANZVELD** – Policy advisor Research& Valorisation and Project Leader Graduates Schools, University of Groningen

**Anaïs GONNEAU** – Joint PhD candidate between University of Strasbourg and University of Groningen

**Axel HONSDORF** – Executive Director, Franco-Bavarian University Center, Technische Universität München

**Mieneke VAN HORZEN** – jurist, TU Delft

**Jodien HOUWERS** – Head of International Relations, University of Groningen

**Jean-François HUON** – Representative on European affairs at Conférence des Présidents d’Université/CLORA, Brussels

**Roel KLEIN-WOLTERINK** – PhD candidate between Erasmus University Rotterdam and the University Paris Diderot

**Monique LATOUR** – Lawyer Legal Affairs, Maastricht University Office

**Guido VAN LEERZEM** – International office, University of Tilburg (former coordinator of the VSNU workgroup on Joint Degrees)

**Sabine LOPEZ** – Head of International Relations, University Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris

**Tessa QUAX** – Joint PhD candidate between Institut Pasteur Paris and Wageningen University

**Hélène PINAUD** – Department of Development, Agence 2e2f, Higher Education

**David PRANGISHVILI** – Associate professor, Microbiology, Institut Pasteur, Paris and joint PhD supervisor

**Mélanie RIBAS** – Adjunct director, ABG Intelli’agence, Paris

**Jeroen SPARLA** – Director of Academic Transfer, Utrecht

**Harald SCHRAEDER** – European cooperation – Conférence des Présidents d’Université, Paris

**Frank ZAAL** – Researcher at the Centre for Human Movement Sciences, University of Groningen

**Mijke ZEEGERS** – Senior researcher at Pallas Health Research, Rotterdam

**Patricia ZIZZO** – Responsable for ‘cotutelles de thèses’, International office, University Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris

---

## UNDER COORDINATION OF:

**Nettie ABBRING** – Réseau franco-néerlandais, Lille – [nettie.abbring@univ-lille3.fr](mailto:nettie.abbring@univ-lille3.fr)

**Anièce HEIJNEN** – Frans-Nederlandse Academie, Utrecht – [a.heijnen@uu.nl](mailto:a.heijnen@uu.nl)

# Links to relevant organisations

---

## JOINT PROGRAMMES

Joiman – Joicon: [www.joiman.eu](http://www.joiman.eu)

EUA Council for doctoral education: [www.eua.be/cde](http://www.eua.be/cde)

ECA : [www.eaconsortium.net](http://www.eaconsortium.net)

EURAXESS, devoted to the mobility of research scholars and scientists in Europe:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index_en.cfm)

---

## FRANCE

Annuaire des écoles doctorales, database of all French doctoral departments :  
<https://appliweb.dgri.education.fr/annuaire/>

Agence CampusFrance, online information and guidance for a study project in France :

- Directory of doctoral programs: [campusfrance.org>Find your program > Doctorate](http://www.campusfrance.org/fria/d/index.html)  
<http://www.campusfrance.org/fria/d/index.html>
- CampusBourse, directory of grants : <http://www.campusfrance.org/fria/bourse/index.html>

CNRS, the national center for scientific research: <http://www.cnrs.fr>

The French National Research Agency: <http://www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr>

National association of doctors of science (ANDeS, *Association nationale des docteurs ès sciences*), which collects and continually updates information on financial aid for doctoral studies: <http://www.andes.asso.fr>

ABG-L'intelli'agence, promoting career opportunities for young PhDs: <http://www.intelliagence.fr>

Fondation Kastler: <http://www.fnak.fr>

Ministry of Higher Education and Research: <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr>

Agency for the evaluation of research and higher education (AERES, *Agence d'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur*): <http://www.aeres-evaluation.fr>

(Source: CampusFrance)

---

## THE NETHERLANDS

Promovendi Netwerk Nederland, organisation for doctoral candidates : <http://www.hetpnn.nl>

KNAW (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences), directory of research schools:  
<http://www.knaw.nl/smartsite.dws?id=27189&Lang=ENG>

Nuffic, the Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education :  
<http://www.nuffic.nl/>

Academic Transfer, all academic job openings at non-profit research institutes, universities and university medical centers in the Netherlands : [www.academictransfer.com](http://www.academictransfer.com)

NVAO, Organisation for Accreditation in Higher Education : <http://www.nvaio.net/>

VSNU, Dutch association of universities: <http://www.vsnu.nl/onderwijs-internationaal.html>

## COLOPHON

**Publication** 2013  
**Graphic design** Loïc Sander  
**Typefaces** FFSanuk



frans | nederlandse academie  
réseau franco | néerlandais