Principles and Policies on Dual Ph.D. Degrees

Background

From time to time the University of Florida may be asked or may seek to collaborate with another institution, typically an international partner, to create a program of study through which a graduate student may earn two Ph.D. degrees, one from each of the participating institutions. Current policy at the University of Florida allows for such collaborative dual-degree arrangements under very limited circumstances. Proposals for such a program must be developed and formally approved before a commitment is made to an individual student or university. Proposals are reviewed by Graduate Council on a case-by-case basis.

This document affirms that while such dual-degree programs are possible, they are not commonplace. Approval of a dual-degree program plan requires that a very strong supportive case is presented to Graduate Council. Approval is by no means assured.

The fundamental basis for a proposed dual-degree program will typically reflect circumstances in which faculty expertise, course offerings, specialized equipment, data or other resources can only be brought to bear by means of and through the proposed dual-degree program. Hence, each proposal is likely to be unique and will be reviewed on its own merits. Approval of a prior dual-degree program of study does not commit Graduate Council to future approvals.

Because each dual-degree proposal is reviewed as a single opportunity, there is no clear formula and no single set of requirements. Hence, this statement identifies and provides some context regarding the key principles under which Graduate Council reviews and considers dual-degree proposals, and some minimum requirements. Early contact (preferably before the student matriculates into both institutions) with Graduate School staff is strongly urged.

The University of Florida seeks and supports a wide range of international activities and collaborations, reflecting its stature as one of the world's great universities. Although uncommon, dual-degree programs are an example of this commitment to an international presence and scholarly excellence that may be elevated by international collaboration.

Definition

In this context, the term "dual degrees" refers to two Ph.D. degrees, awarded to a single recipient, with one degree being awarded by the University of Florida and the other being awarded by a partner institution. The degrees are awarded simultaneously or nearly so and reflect the accomplishment of a single, collaborative program of study that has been guided by faculty at both institutions, making use of the resources of both institutions, and reflecting a synergy and enhancement to the student's program of study that could not reasonably have been accomplished at either institution alone, or through a less comprehensive partnership. The enhancement must be of sufficient magnitude and significance to merit the award of two Ph.D. degrees.

Guiding Principles and Process

1. The University of Florida will consider participation in dual Ph.D. degree programs only with **partner institutions of stature**, and in which the partner institution's component of the specific dual-degree program is to be guided by faculty who are highly regarded for their academic expertise. In general, the expectation is that the partner institution has a significant successful history of doctoral degree education, including such a track record in the specific academic unit/department that is to participate in the dual-degree program of study. Participating faculty at the partner institution will manifest a high level of accomplishment in the particular field of study. The University of Florida faculty member proposing a dual Ph.D, degree program shall be prepared to affirm these attributes of the partner institution and the collaborating faculty.

2. The University of Florida will enter dual Ph.D. degree arrangements only with partner universities with which UF has a **fully executed prior Memorandum of Understanding** describing intended collaboration. UF faculty members who are giving even the most preliminary consideration to the development of a dual Ph.D. degree program of study should first contact the University of Florida International Center to determine whether such a prior collaboration agreement exists. If it does not, considerable extra time should be allocated to accomplish the general agreement, because it must be fully executed and in place before a dual-degree plan of study can be approved. A template format for such an umbrella collaboration agreement can be found at: https://internationalcenter.ufl.edu/faculty-engagement/international-agreements/requirements

3. The actual plan for a proposed dual-degree program is **student-specific** and must follow the format available in the template document that can be found at: http://aa.ufl.edu/policies/academic-degree-programs/developing-programs/international-dual-degree-program/

4. All materials supporting a proposed dual-degree program must be **completed and submitted to Graduate Council for consideration as early in the anticipated program of study as possible**. Preferably, the proposed program would be approved before the student matriculates in either of the participating Ph.D. programs. It is recognized that in some cases the value of a potential dual-degree program may not be apparent prior to admission; accordingly, approval may be sought during the first academic year of study at either university. No proposed dual Ph.D. degree program will be approved after a student has made substantial progress…defined as having completed the equivalent of one year of full-time study…toward completion of the Ph.D. degree program at either university.

5. **All University of Florida degree requirements must be met** in order for the UF Ph.D. to be awarded. Academic credits earned at the partner institution and formally transferred for credit toward the UF Ph.D. must meet the usual criteria for such transfer.

6. **All necessary steps required to complete and submit a dissertation** at the University of Florida must be followed and must be completed prior to the completion of any additional processes required by the partner institution. This includes the University of Florida requirement that dissertations be submitted in English. Some dual Ph.D. degree programs may involve two quite

separate dissertations, differing in content, language, format or other attributes. In such cases, if the documents are in two languages, there are it is expected that each dissertation will include an abstract or similar summary in the alternative language. Other dual Ph.D. programs may involve closely integrated study at the two participating institutions leading to a single dissertation. Graduate Council will consider proposals in either model. However, faculty seeking approval for a dual Ph.D. degree program that includes a single dissertation should be prepared to articulate how the attributes of the research and the resulting dissertation product clearly exceed the level of expectation for a dissertation associated with a single Ph.D. This requirement may include an additional product…beyond the dissertation itself…such as a journal article. Arrangements for formal deposit of the final dissertation in the library of the partner institution should be agreed in advance.