

## JOINT DOCTORATES POLICY

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<b>Related Documents (explicitly cross-referenced)</b>	SCD Research Degree Regulations Information Paper: TEQSA's approach to the assessment of joint and dual awards, September 2013 Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards), 2011-2013 Australian Qualifications Framework, January 2013.
<b>Higher Education Standards (2021)</b>	4.1.1, 5.2.4, 5.4, 6.1.3c
<b>National Code (2018) (if directly relevant)</b>	

### Preamble

In this policy 'the institutions' refers to the Sydney College of Divinity (SCD) and Chongshin University and Seminary (CUS) in the Republic of Korea.

This policy refers specifically to the development of an agreement between SCD and CUS for a Joint PhD and Joint ThD, in which the thesis is jointly supervised by the 'home' and the 'partner' institution and the one doctoral degree will be conferred jointly by the two institutions. CUS is comparable to SCD in respect of academic standards for these degrees, expertise in the theological areas from which the thesis topics will be developed, and approaches to student support (AEI NOOSR Assessment: Section 1).

This policy covers the two situations, where SCD is the home institution and also where SCD is the partner institution, since in either event SCD is endorsing an academic program and outcome under its name.

It may also provide a basis for the development of other joint award programs in the future.

### *The Two Degrees*

In the Joint Doctorates Program, the PhD and ThD are differentiated from each other along the same lines as those pertaining in the two institutions for their discrete degrees. In both institutions the two doctorates share the same general academic specifications. The only difference between the two degrees lies in the different admission requirements for each in respect of previous subjects studied and the consequent area of research for the proposed thesis. Candidature for the PhD is available for a broad

spectrum of research in theologically related areas and the prior study required for admission is typically the blend of theological and other academic studies appropriate for pursuing research in the proposed area, though PhD candidature is also available for specifically theological research if desired by the candidate. Candidature for the ThD is reserved for research strictly within the bounds of Theology, as that is commonly understood, and requires substantial prior study in Theology for admission.

The Joint Doctorates Program has been devised so that the research degree specifications of each institution, operating within the terms of the relevant national accreditation, are respected.

The SCD *Research Degrees Regulations* have been approved by TEQSA as meeting the relevant *Threshold Standards* and the *Australian Qualifications Framework*.

### ***Chongshin University and Seminary***

Chongshin University and Seminary is fully authorized by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, Republic of Korea, to confer baccalaureate and postgraduate degrees (MA, MDiv, ThM, PhD, and ThD) on those who have successfully accomplished all the requirements set by the University. It is a well-established Christian institution of Higher Education and its accredited doctoral programs are available in both Korean and English. The parent institution was founded in Pyongyang in 1901. After a period of closure under the Japanese occupation in 1938, it was re-opened in Seoul in 1949 under the name of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary. The classification ‘university’ was first gained in 1969. Today it has a main campus in Seoul for most of its degree programs, including the PhD (1987) and ThD (2000), and another in Kyunggi-do, for seminary students (MDiv).

## **Purpose of the Joint Doctorates Program**

The Joint Doctorates Program is a particular implementation and amplification of the existing fraternal agreement for mutual academic cooperation between the two institutions signed on 10 February 2014 and is to be the subject of a specific *Memorandum of Agreement* between them. The fraternal agreement provides in general terms for student exchange, mutual assistance and sharing of academic expertise for academic faculty, and interlibrary loans and sharing of databases.

Within this broad agreement, the purpose of the Joint Doctorates Program is to provide specific benefits for students and faculty of the two institutions by facilitating mutual cooperation in research. It broadens opportunities for doctoral students enrolled in either institution to benefit from additional expert supervision in particular fields, to gain international research experience, to extend their network of research contacts, and to improve their employment opportunities by demonstrating their approval by the international as well as the home institution. It will also encourage the exchange of research and general academic information between faculty members across the two institutions, with the potential to develop research collaborations and other shared academic projects.

While the program is open to any potential research students with the required academic qualifications and language proficiency, it is expected that it will be of particular interest to Australians with a Korean background and perhaps to Koreans wishing to expand their horizons to Australia. SCD has already identified some Australian Koreans interested in participating in the program with SCD as their home institution.

## **Development**

This policy has been developed with reference to current TEQSA policy, together with the Threshold Standards on which TEQSA policy is based, and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF):

*Information Paper: TEQSA's approach to the assessment of joint and dual awards*, September 2013  
*Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards)*, December 2011, with Amendments  
January 2013  
*Australian Qualifications Framework*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, January 2013.

The two joint doctorates will preserve the standards of SCD's discrete PhD and ThD as accredited by TEQSA till 20 November 2020.

This policy is aligned with TEQSA's statement in the *Information Paper* that:

Joint awards may be one aspect of collaboration with a partner as part of a wider mission to facilitate staff and student exchanges, recruitment of international students and/or stronger research linkages.

It has also been benchmarked with related policies and procedures in several Australian universities, as follows:

Flinders University, Macquarie University, Monash University, University of Adelaide, University of Central Queensland, University of Melbourne, University of Queensland, University of Sydney, University of Technology Sydney, University of Western Australia, University of Western Sydney.

Since SCD is a private Higher Education Provider, without access to either the Research Training Scheme (RTS) or the Australian Research Council (ARC) grants, this policy takes account of two particular ways in which its arrangements may differ somewhat in focus from those espoused by some of these public universities:

- (i) SCD research students are not funded through the RTS but pay their own fees either up-front or, if eligible, with a Fee-Help loan for their semesters of enrolment with SCD;
- (ii) for this reason, the relationship between SCD and CUS on which the implementation of this policy is predicated is not necessarily referenced to specific large-scale research collaborations like those supported by ARC funding and the availability of doctoral students supported by the RTS, but to the broad range of academic relations embraced by the fraternal agreement that include research activities.

This policy and the accompanying regulations have been developed through a series of meetings following an initial invitation extended to SCD by the Head of Theology at CUS, Professor Cheon Seol Han, in 2013. Within SCD, those most involved have been Professor Diane Speed (Dean), Professor James Harrison (Research Director), and Dr Honam Kim (Dean of Studies, Korean Program). Both Academic Board and Council have received information about the project and progress reports since early 2014 and have indicated in-principle support. Their final approval of the program, with regard to the matters falling under the authority of each, will follow when they are satisfied that the various documents are in order: the *Policy on Joint Doctorates*, the *Sydney College of Divinity and Chongsbin University and Seminary Regulations for Joint PhD and ThD*, the *Memorandum of Agreement between the Sydney College of Divinity and Chongsbin University and Seminary for a Joint PhD and ThD Program*, and the template for the individual agreement with each student enrolling in the program.

The CUS Academic Board has already approved the Joint Doctorates Program from the CUS point of view.

## Responsibilities

The program will be approved by the relevant governing bodies of both institutions and the agreement recorded in a *Memorandum of Agreement* to be signed by Head of each institution.

The program will be administered by a Joint Doctorates Committee, comprising an equal number of qualified persons from each institution, usually two, appointed by and reporting to the Academic Boards of the two institutions or their delegated bodies. The Chair will be elected annually by the Committee itself from amongst its members. The Joint Doctorates Committee will:

1. Provide initial advice to any potential applicant.
2. Verify the applicant's qualifications and determine admission.
3. Determine the particular arrangements for the individual candidature and ensure that the individual *Memorandum of Agreement* is signed by the appropriate representative of each institution and the candidate.
4. Oversee admission and enrolment.
5. Appoint the supervisors and receive regular reports from them regarding the candidate's progress.
6. Report on admission, critical milestones, and progress to the two Academic Boards.
7. Oversee any reasonable and necessary changes to the initial plan set down in the individual *Memorandum of Agreement* in the course of the candidature and maintain a record of any change.
8. Appoint examiners, consider their reports, and make a recommendation to the two Academic Boards regarding award of the degree.

On the recommendation of the two Academic Boards the degree will be jointly conferred by the relevant body in each institution.

## Place of Enrolment

Candidates for the Joint PhD or ThD will enrol with either SCD or CUS as their home institution and with the other as the partner institution. Normal visa requirements will pertain in relation to travel between the two. For any foreign national enrolled in person with SCD, CRICOS requirements will also be observed in line with the *ESOS Act 2000*.

Candidates will be enrolled for the majority of their candidature in the home institution and, normally, enrolled for one or two semesters in the partner institution. They will be enrolled in only one institution at a time but their progress will be overseen throughout by the Joint Doctorates Committee, which will include members of both institutions. The specific program for each candidate, including the plans for specific enrolment at each institution and ongoing participation by the supervisors in both institutions regardless of the location of the student, will be set out in the individual agreement signed by the potential candidate and the two institutions before the candidature starts. The candidate's individual program may be varied only with the permission of the Joint Doctorates Committee and must continue to adhere in principle to the broad scheme laid out here and in the *Sydney College of Divinity and Chongshin University and Seminary Regulations for Joint PhD and ThD*.

TEQSA indicates as a guide that two-thirds of the candidature for a joint doctoral program might be spent in the home institution, where the majority of the research will be based, and one-third in the partner institution. While noting this advice, SCD wishes to leave the specific distribution of time open enough to allow flexibility in the precise length of time to be spent in the partner institution, always provided that at least one semester is spent enrolled in the partner institution and that the majority of the time is spent enrolled in the home institution, for two main reasons:

- (i) The thesis topic may depend on particular resources more readily available in one location or the other. Although the analysis of material and writing of the thesis is to take place mainly while the candidate is located in the home institution, it will be wise to provide for reasonable flexibility with

regard to the amount of time to be spent in the partner institution if the accessing of resources is an issue. As one example, the thesis topic might concern the diaspora of the Korean churches in Australia or the influence of Australian churches in Korea, and in either case unique primary written sources or oral memories may have to be accessed from one or other location and a certain length of time may be unavoidable. Again, progress on the thesis might benefit significantly from attendance at special events in one or other location such as a series of lectures or seminars with a visiting expert from a third institution and related conversations with that expert, which might further grow the student's international research networks.

- (ii) In this electronic age, when a person's presence may be virtual and effective communication is not necessarily controlled by physical location, the supervisor based in the partner institution will normally remain available for electronic consultation when the candidate is actually located in the home institution, and vice versa. This will render less clear-cut the division of research time between one institution and the other. With regard to the general use of electronic communication in research, it is becoming increasingly common for scholars to participate in international research conferences and other research gatherings by video-conferencing and other electronic means. From this point of view, the ongoing electronic communication will provide relevant research experience.

## Structure of Candidature in the Two Institutions

### *CUS as the Home Institution*

Students complete four semesters of coursework as the first part of the PhD or ThD before starting the thesis. This coursework typically includes specific preparatory work for the thesis, and in part this corresponds to that which commonly occurs during the first year of candidacy in the Australian doctorates, such as the SCD PhD and ThD: formulation of the precise thesis topic and identification and assembly of the main bibliographical materials to support the thesis topic. The thesis production then normally occupies the next four semesters, although the CUS regulations allow for the thesis to be submitted after two semesters should that prove possible. At CUS the coursework and thesis together constitute the total doctoral workload. In the context of this total candidacy, students undertaking the thesis at CUS as the home institution will spend a minimum of one semester enrolled at SCD while the majority of the doctoral candidature will take place at CUS.

The thesis itself may be written in English or Korean, with appropriate proficiency in the chosen language from the start of thesis-writing. In either case, the Abstract is provided in both English and Korean. Participation in SCD research seminars and presentation of a research paper, as expected during the time at SCD, necessitates appropriate proficiency in English.

For full details of admission, language proficiency requirements, duration, structure, supervision, thesis length, and examination, see the *Sydney College of Divinity and Chongshin University and Seminary Regulations for Joint PhD and ThD*.

### *SCD as the Home Institution*

Students proceed to the thesis as soon as they are allowed to enrol because the admission requirements for the SCD degrees, in line with the AQF, specify previous qualifications that constitute appropriate preparation for the doctoral research and thesis. If the potential candidate has not already fulfilled all such requirements and if it is more suitable to complete the requirements at CUS than at SCD, some or all of the CUS coursework may be regarded as pre-doctoral studies to constitute the assumed knowledge and fulfil the requirements for admission to the SCD research degrees.

The first year of the SCD doctorate is typically occupied by formulation of the precise thesis topic and identification and assembly of the main bibliographical materials to support the thesis topic. The thesis production then occupies the next four to six semesters.

The thesis is written in English, with appropriate proficiency in English from the start. The Abstract is provided in both English and Korean.

For full details of admission, language proficiency requirements, duration, structure, supervision, thesis length, and examination, see the *Sydney College of Divinity and Chongshin University and Seminary Regulations for Joint PhD and ThD*.

Some difference between the two institutions in requirements for thesis length and language proficiency in their discrete degrees means that it is appropriate to reach a compromise for the joint doctorates, always provided that the agreed specifications meet the relevant Threshold Standards.

## Thesis Length

The ideal length of a doctoral thesis may be described as the length that best allows for the presentation of a cogent, appropriately documented argument that sets out the nature of the topic, why it matters, and what is to be said as an original contribution to knowledge in the area. The measurable length may and will vary somewhat from one thesis to another, provided that the learning outcomes are demonstrably achieved. If it is necessary, for example, to present a substantial amount of sheer information that may not otherwise be available to the examiners before an argument can be presented coherently, the thesis may run to more words than a thesis consisting of an argument challenging the interpretation of reasonably well-known and accessible information.

Again, although both institutions would normally expect a freshly written thesis to be submitted for a doctoral degree, it is possible, as at many Australian and international universities, to submit a portfolio of articles presenting the published results of research in a particular area, accompanied by an explanatory cover document. The actual length in words approximates to the length that would have pertained in a freshly written thesis but may vary somewhat in relation to the demands of the publisher.

The expected normal length of the doctoral thesis is 120,000 words at CUS and a maximum of 80,000 words at SCD, reflecting some difference in cultural custom. The current trend in Australian universities is to stipulate shorter theses than in the past, though some permit a range of lengths. Macquarie University, for example, stipulates 75,000 to 100,000 words. Stipulating a range is one way of addressing precisely such variations in the nature and circumstances of individual theses as those outlined above.

For the Joint PhD or ThD, SCD and CUS have agreed to recognize as acceptable a length between the two specifications, provided that the length presents the argument appropriately. The AQF does not specify the length of a research doctoral thesis. Theses produced in SCD as the home institution may more nearly approximate the SCD specification, while those produced at CUS may more nearly approximate the CUS specification.

A recommended length will be set out in the individual agreement with each student.

## Language Proficiency

Language proficiency requirements for SCD's own discrete doctorates are as follows:

Applicants whose entry qualifications were obtained in an institution where English is not the language of instruction require a minimum IELTS (or equivalent) score of 7.0 in all bands of the test.

For candidates undertaking the thesis at CUS as the home institution, the regular processes at CUS for ensuring Korean or English proficiency, as relevant, will pertain. For candidates undertaking the thesis at SCD as the home institution, SCD will accept certification of English proficiency from CUS, as if for entrance to a CUS English doctorate, if the candidate does not otherwise have evidence of the requisite proficiency in English such as IELTS. This alternative is acceptable because CUS is able to make available coursework preparation in English proficiency appropriate for production of a doctoral thesis written in English.

The relevant language proficiency will be set out in the individual agreement with each student.

## **Other Elements of Candidature**

In respect of the elements canvassed briefly below, the requirements of the Joint Doctorates Program align closely with those for the discrete SCD doctorates.

### ***Supervision and Progress***

In line with joint doctoral programs in Australian universities, the Joint Doctorates Program requires a principal supervisor in each institution. In addition, associate supervisors may be appointed by the Joint Doctorates Committee as relevant. This practice more than meets SCD regulations for its discrete degrees, which require one principal and one associate supervisor.

The supervisors will confer each semester and report to the Joint Doctorates Committee on the candidate's progress. If this is deemed to be unsatisfactory, and no special considerations pertain, the Committee will determine appropriate directions to the candidate. If progress continues to be unsatisfactory, the candidature may be terminated after due notice.

Any change of supervisors will be decided by the Committee, taking account of all relevant factors.

### ***Research Seminars***

During production of the thesis, the candidate will participate in such seminars as the institution of current enrolment directs. While students are enrolled at SCD, they will be expected to participate in the research seminars or workshops held for candidates for its discrete doctorates.

### ***Examination***

The thesis will be presented in accordance with the requirements of the home institution. Whether the thesis is written in English or Korean, the Abstract will be provided in both English and Korean.

There will be three examiners, all external to both SCD and CUS, and at least one proposed by each institution. At least two of the three will be of international standing.

## **Issuance Documents**

For each of the Joint PhD and the Joint ThD a single double-badged testamur will be issued. The testamur will show the issuance information required by the two national authorities, including indication of the home and partner institution and the language in which the thesis was written. Other documents will be provided as required by the two national authorities.