

Global PhDs at St Andrews

Supervisor and School information set



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General programme information

Global PhDs at St Andrews are what we term joint programmes towards a collaborative award for PhD with a partner University.

They can take different formats but are always a joint supervision towards a PhD and always result in an award from both universities. This can be either a single joint certificate, or two individual certificates which reference the collaborative nature of the degree.

These degrees are often known as 'co-tutelles' or joint PhDs internationally. They provide the opportunity for doctoral students to undertake research at both St Andrews and a nominated partner institution and with two (or more) academic supervisors.

As such, they allow engagement with two distinct research environments and activities, with two or more subject-expert supervisors, and they encourage wider research collaboration than for many standard PhDs.

For St Andrews, the partner, and the student and their supervisors, they can enhance partnership activity and research collaboration meaningfully.

The programmes require that a student follows requirements and processes of two institutions throughout, although there are necessary variations because of the collaborative nature of things.

This document aims to outline the key information necessary for School awareness, to ensure supervisors and DoPGRs are aware of differences from St Andrews' norms, and related requirements.

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Proposal and approval

Global PhDs require institutional approval via the Associate Provost Education. Proposal forms are available online and can be supplied at request for completion by the St Andrews supervisor. Information on the partner institution will be necessary as will project design details, meaning that it is expected that the supervisor will need to liaise with their co-supervisor at the partner university for some content.

Study plan

The proposal captures key details including the expected pattern of study and dates and locations to be spent at each institution throughout the degree.

Students must spend at least 12 months within a Global PhD at each institution. At least this minimum duration must also take place at St Andrews within the first three years. An equal split of time within the normal St Andrews maximum duration is a preference. Durations longer than the normal St Andrews

maximum are not permissible.

Dates and locations will be requested by month to allow for record creation, compliance and engagement monitoring, and fee liability assessment, etc.

It is strongly recommended that durations are of 12 months per institution to avoid overburdensome visa and travel costs, but periods of 6 months will normally be approved. Exceptions can be requested with a suitable rationale, and will be considered by the Associate Provost Education.

An example of a study plan that might be proposed is given below:

Start date 27 September 2026

St Andrews 27 September 2026-26 September 2027

Bonn 27 September 2027-26 September 2028

St Andrews 27 September 2028-26 June 2029

Bonn 27 June 2029-26 March 2030

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Proposal and approval

It is recognised that changes to patterns of study may be required for the success of the project or for personal reasons. They can be accommodated within the overall requirements outlined above. Requests for changes should be made to the Global Office in advance to allow for necessary liaison with partners and internal colleagues. Should a supervisory change be necessary, this should also be communicated to the Global Office.

The Global Office aims to be in touch twice annually to request an update on the study plan, but we request notice as soon as a supervisor or School is aware of the need for any amendment.

Lead institution

The proposal form will also request a lead institution. A lead institution will often act as an arbiter in the case of administrative dispute, but more meaningfully has responsibility for progress review and exam

arrangements. Details of how these are normally arranged are on pages 4 and 5 below.

School approval

Proposal forms require DoPGR and HoS approval and the proposal form should be submitted to the Global Office for onward liaison over institutional sign off.

Approval by the DoPGR and HoS signals agreement to the arrangements that will be put in place between the institutions for programme management, progress review, exam, and length of thesis, etc. Details will be outlined in a contract which will be signed by the supervisor on behalf of the School.

School approval also commits to potential costs for examinations which may be greater than the norm for a St Andrews PhD due to travel requirements or expanded exam committee membership, which will be communicated prior to final contract creation.

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Contracts, application and registration

After a proposal has been approved, the Global Office will begin work with the partner on a Global PhD contract.

Students must apply to both universities, and meet individual entry requirements. It is important to note that these may differ, as may processes for application, documentary requirements, and national assessment of qualifications.

At St Andrews, a Global PhD requires as a condition that contracts are concluded between the parties. Even where all academic and English language requirements are met, the student will therefore receive a conditional offer until such time as a contract is complete and fully-signed.

It is only after completion of contract that an unconditional offer may be made, and subsequent CAS processes

begun (where necessary).

Progress review

Global PhDs require a collaborative model for progress review. The lead institution will be responsible for arrangements. Progress reviews will take place once per year (usually in month 9) as normal. They may be conducted by the lead, or at the current location of study. Often the lead will use their norms and communicate outcomes to the partner. The sharing of reports, if necessary, should be managed through supervisors.

In some cases, a different model will be specified. For example, it can be necessary to involve partner university colleagues on a St Andrews panel. Arrangements will be made by the Global Office in liaison with the partner and will be clarified in a contract for the Global PhD and communicated to Schools.

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Examinations

St Andrews aims to ensure as straightforward an examination process as possible which meets mutual policy needs, but there is always variation from the process for a St Andrews PhD.

Exam formats vary by individual partner. Process will always be outlined in a Global PhD contract and shared with the School.

Formats will be negotiated via the Global Office in liaison with the Associate Provost Education. The agreed format will be subject to a test that the process and principles match St Andrews' own aims for an examination under QAA principles.

An oral element is always a requirement. This may be a St Andrews style viva, or in the style of the partner, but will typically require expanded membership so that the committee includes one internal nominated by each institution and either one external mutually chosen, or

one nominated by each institution.

The lead institution will often be required to cover external examiners' fees, and that may mean fees for two rather than the usual one external. Schools should be aware that their internal may also need to attend overseas with consequent travel costs. Wherever possible, arrangements will be agreed for potential online participation.

Partner institutions in Europe sometimes require that a review committee convenes, and there may also therefore be fees for external reviewers prior to the oral element.

On some occasions it is necessary to agree a two-stage examination to meet respective institutional policy or national legislation.

All details will be communicated in a contract for the Global PhD.

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Visa compliance and engagement monitoring

As with a St Andrews PhD, Global PhDs require touchpoints and engagement monitoring for visa compliance purposes.

Progress reviews are an excellent opportunity to monitor engagement alongside regular supervisory meetings.

Regardless of location, an annual progress review and at least one annual meeting with the student and the whole supervisory team is required (which can be online).

During transitions to partner universities, it is important that we receive confirmation of arrival from the partner supervisor. This should be communicated to the Registry PGR team and the Global Office.

Please also alert both to any issues to do with engagement or attendance which last for two weeks or more.

Location of studies and travel reporting

Students are required to meet normal expectations for location of studies requests regardless of provision of study plans which include dates and locations of study as outlined in proposals and in-programme review by the Global Office.

Although access and rights exist at both universities throughout, students will be considered a student of one institution or the other in line with the study plan regardless of external activity such as fieldwork. When registered at St Andrews, routine travel submissions, risk assessment, and fieldwork approvals, etc. should be undertaken.

Students requiring changes of circumstances should liaise with the Global Office to ensure requests can be accommodated by the partner prior to submitting standard requests at St Andrews. They may also need to make similar requests at the partner.

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Supervisor and School information set - roles and responsibilities



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Supervisor and School responsibilities

- Complete and submit proposal form with relevant School approvals, or if applying through the Global doctoral scholarship scheme submit requested documentation.
- If the latter is awarded, provide project summary via pro forma from Global Office.
- Sign contract when requested.
- Update Global Office on any study plan or supervisory changes.
- Ensure appropriate engagement monitoring for visa sponsored students.
- Conduct at least one annual meeting with full supervisory team and student.
- Follow outlined progress review process and share outcomes with partner supervisor (or collect from partner supervisor).
- Follow designed exam process and ensure internal travel costs and external costs are covered as per the contract.

Supervisor and School responsibilities

- Ensure student awareness of need to submit routine travel submissions, fieldwork risk assessments, research governance processes, and location of studies requests when studying at St Andrews.

Global Office responsibilities

- Provide support for completion of proposal form.
- Liaise with Associate Provost Education on approval.
- Liaise with partner on contract and circulate for signature.
- Update Registry, Fees, and Scholarships colleagues on confirmed details once contract complete.
- Liaise with partner, student, and Registry on changes of circumstances requests or amendments to study plan.
- Confirm degree outcome, certificate, and graduation processes at conclusion of programme.

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Student responsibilities

- Apply to each institution and meet respective entry requirements.
- Sign contract when requested.
- Complete any necessary immigration processes as guided.
- Update Global Office on any study plan changes.
- Ensure any notified immigration status requirements are met.
- Complete matriculation and registrations as prompted.
- Liaise with Global Office and Registry on any change of circumstances for onward liaison with the partner.
- Maintain address and contact details through MySaint during transitions.
- Submit location of studies requests for any periods at partner institution.
- Complete standard St Andrews processes for fieldwork, travel, research governance, etc.
- Ensure awareness of partner institution requirements for records, immigration, changes of circumstance, etc.



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