Cotutelle (Individual PhD) Degree Program
at the Hebrew University

What is a Cotutelle?

A Cotutelle is the French term for “joint enrollment,” and refers to a student-specific agreement between two (or more) universities. This agreement facilitates the joint supervision of doctoral research and provides the candidate with a joint PhD degree from both institutions upon completion.

Students earning a Cotutelle degree must be admitted by and registered at both institutions (as a general rule, one serves as the “home institution” and the other as the “host institution”) for the duration of the degree. They are obliged to spend research time at each institution, and they must complete the PhD program requirements as specified by the agreement (as a general rule, they must comply with the requirement of the home university).

Cotutelle degrees at the Hebrew University

Hebrew University has been facilitating Cotutelle degrees for years, with the aim of establishing significant, sustainable relationships with international universities through joint research supervision. From our vantage point, Cotutelle agreements are a vehicle for the internationalization of PhD degree studies in particular, and for the cultivation of international collaboration at large. The university boasts first-rate research training partnerships with institutions throughout Asia, Europe, North America and Australia. These Cotutelle schemes are open to both international and domestic PhD candidates alike.

What are the benefits of a Cotutelle?

A Cotutelle degree enriches the experience of PhD students through enhanced opportunities for research collaboration and exposure to diverse cultures. Moreover, the Cotutelle framework typically attracts highly qualified international PhD students, thereby enhancing Hebrew University’s international profile and global reputation.

Supervisor Benefits:

- Establishment and enhancement of international research collaborations due to joint candidate supervision
- Increased potential for joint publications and citation rates
- Tailored pathways for attracting international research students in specific fields

Candidate Benefits:

- Opportunity to conduct PhD research abroad at an institution with expertise in their specific field of research
- Exposure to diverse academic environments, research training, equipment and technologies at both institutions
• Increased potential for international networking and collaboration
• Cultivation of intercultural competencies, adaptability, and global research skills
• Enhanced post-PhD employability

**How does a Cotutelle work?**

**Admission and Registration:** Students participating in a Cotutelle program are admitted and registered as full-time students in both participating institutions simultaneously. The students’ PhD studies will meet the program requirements as specified in the agreement.

**Tuition:** As a general rule, participants in a Cotutelle agreement will only be required to pay tuition fees to their home institution (unless otherwise stated). While they will not be required to make tuition payments to the partner institution, they will be responsible for paying any travel, immigration, health insurance, and/or living expenses while abroad.

**Scholarships:** In addition to the range of PhD scholarships available at HUJI, Hebrew University supervisors are welcome to apply for the “HUJI International PhD Talent Scholarship” for supplemental support for international Cotutelle students. Full details can be found [here](#).

**Supervision:** Students are required to have a principal supervisor at each institution, both of whom are encouraged to maintain ongoing contact for the duration of the research period. Students will carry out their research work under the joint supervision of these supervisors for the duration of their degree.

**Mobility:** Students are required to spend a research period at each university, with a minimum of one academic year at the host institution. This may be completed in a single visit, or cumulatively, subject to funding and the unique needs of their research program. Before entering into a Cotutelle agreement, the students and their supervisors from the two institutions will determine a detailed study schedule and academic path; this schedule should be approved by both institutions.

**Thesis and Examination Process:** Upon conclusion of the research, participants must submit a single thesis for examination by both universities, in full accordance with the regulations of each institution or the home institution (as specified in the specific agreement). The universities will also make a joint decision regarding the award of the degree, including a final grade, should this be the practice.

**Conferring of Degree Certificate:** Once the students successfully complete the respective PhD degree requirements at each university, they may attend a graduation ceremony at either institution, and will receive a degree certificate from each university reflecting their joint degree, mentioning the names of both institutions. The degree titles may differ according to local regulations to which each institution is bound. The certificates will carry a notation to the effect that the degree has been awarded within the framework of a Cotutelle agreement. In
some cases, only a single certificate will be awarded. In this case, the certificate will be joint to both institutions.

**Agreement:** The legal basis for a Cotutelle doctorate is an individual agreement which sets the conditions for joint supervision, evaluation, joint degree conferral, funding, and the details of the individual student’s research/study program. This agreement will be drafted and signed by the designated authorities at each participating university. To initiate this process, Hebrew University supervisor should contact the relevant office at the Authority for Research Students (Experimental Sciences or Humanities and Social Sciences). Note that the drafting and finalization of a Cotutelle agreement can take time, and we recommend that PhD supervisors factor this into their timeline when making specific arrangements with a candidate. (A Cotutelle agreement does not always exist from the start; it may also be drafted for PhD candidates who have already begun their research at the university).

**Once upon a Cotutelle…**

Dr. Natalie Klein-Sela recently earned her joint PhD degree in legal psychology through a Cotutelle framework at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the University of Amsterdam. Klein-Sela’s first encounter with the Hebrew University transpired during her master’s degree studies in the Netherlands, when she conducted visiting research in a cognitive psychology lab, under the supervision of Prof. Gershon Ben-Shakhar. Following the completion of her master’s degree, Dr. Klein-Sela returned to pursue her PhD degree in this same Hebrew University lab. Recognizing the importance of her continued collaboration and affiliation with her university in the Netherlands, Dr. Klein-Sela recruited the support of Prof. Ben-Shakhar, and a path was created to facilitate her joint research at the two universities.

“I would recommend to anyone considering a career in academia to pursue joint PhD studies with an international institution. This can lead to international publications, can help build important global connections, and open up future post-doctoral research opportunities abroad,” Dr. Klein-Sela says. “By having this joint base of study, the candidate receives guidance and feedback from two advisors, gains exposure to labs abroad and in Israel, and broadens their understanding of how research is conducted in different parts of the world.”
Featured: Dr. Natalie Klein- Sela being awarded her PhD degree from the University of Amsterdam.