

The policy of Cooperative Research Guidance (CRG) and Double Degree Program (DDP)

The decision of the Academic Affairs Committee.

Hokkaido University

in January 2025.

1. Background of Policy Formulation

In March 2009, Hokkaido University's International Education Exchange Working Group compiled a report titled "Accelerating International Education at Hokkaido University – Guidelines for Credit Transfer and Introduction of Double Degree Programs," which is enabling the implementation of DDP with foreign universities. Subsequently, the Educational Reform Office and the International Affairs Department explored new educational programs involving mutual research supervision with foreign universities. In November 2015, they introduced the "Cotutelle Program", which is a system for joint research supervision of doctoral (postgraduate) students.

Starting from the 2025 academic year, this program will be renamed "Cooperative Research Guidance (CRG)" and its scope expanded to include master's programs. This policy document establishes the fundamental matters related to the implementation of CRG and DDP.

2. Cooperative Research Guidance (CRG)

(1) Definition of CRG

CRG is an educational program for which agreements are made between Hokkaido University and overseas universities to allow master's or doctoral students to receive research guidance from faculty members of each university for the "specified period". The "specified period" is generally between 6 months to 1 year for master's programs and at least 1 year for doctoral programs.

(2) Basic system

a. Enrollment status of students and tuition fees

Students shall be formally enrolled in the single university they originally belong to, and tuition and other fees, in principle, shall be paid only to the university in accordance with the memorandum. However, arrangements and decisions for tuition fees shall be made in consultation with the partner university.

Hokkaido University shall admit program participating students from partner universities as special research students.

b. Guidance system and the period of research guidance

Teaching staff from both universities shall jointly guide students. Each university shall appoint a chief supervisor and sub-supervisor(s).

The research guidance period at a university where students go to study abroad shall be generally between 6 months to 1 year for master's programs and at least 1 year for doctoral programs in principle (this can be cumulative). If significant achievements are recognized in the research guidance, part of the guidance period above may be conducted online for both master's and doctoral programs (details of the acceptable online period are described in article g, "Online research guidance").

However, the combined accumulated period of CRG and research guidance described in Articles 24-4 and 24-5 in the HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDIES shall not exceed one year for students doing a master's degree.

The time of commencement of research guidance overseas shall be determined in consultation with the partner university and shall also be sometime from the first year to the first semester of the second year in the doctoral degree program in principle. For master's programs, it is preferable to start between the second semester of the first year and the first semester of the second year.

c. Academic degree examination method

The teaching staff of the partner university (students' supervisors) shall be involved in academic degree examinations for students who originally belong to Hokkaido University as a home university. The examination method shall be determined in sufficient consultation with the partner university and be subject to the graduate school's internal regulations. Students who originally belong to the partner university shall be examined in accordance with the university's academic degree examination method.

For travel expenses and accommodation fees involving the degree examination, advance arrangements shall be made in consultation with the partner university. If the teaching staff from the partner university cannot attend an academic degree examination due to unavoidable reasons but it is judged that they can fully participate in the examination using a TV conference system and the like, attendance in such a manner shall be acceptable. This should be taken into consideration when making a memorandum.

d. Statement in diplomas

Diplomas (in Japanese) issued by Hokkaido University to students who have completed a CRG shall include the words, "Research guidance required for the completion of the master/doctoral degree program was provided jointly with ○○ University."

Diplomas in English shall include the words "under a CRG agreement with ○○ university" at the end of the text.

However, the word described above is not automatically granted by simply fulfilling the specified period of CRG; it requires sufficient recognition of achievements of CRG by the degree examination committee.

e. Conclusion of agreements and memorandums

To ensure the stable and continuous implementation of the educational program, an inter-

university academic exchange agreement or a departmental academic exchange agreement shall be signed before concluding a memorandum which is necessary for the implementation of the CRG. The memorandum shall include the content and implementation method of research supervision, the system for supervising students, and arrangements for tuition and other fees. A memorandum for each student shall also be concluded in consultation with the partner university to confirm individual matters related to the exchange of students.

Even if the partner university uses different terms such as “Cotutelle,” “Joint PhD,” or “Conjoint Doctoral Degrees,” if its content is the same as above CRG, it will be treated as CRG at Hokkaido University.

Then, the partner university requests the implementation of a program with a name which is different from “CRG” (e.g. cotutelle, joint PhD), and if it meets the definition above, a memorandum shall be concluded as a CRG. In this case, it is desirable to conclude a memorandum that includes an article stating, “this program shall be titled as a CRG by Hokkaido University and a joint PhD program by ○○ University.”

f. Research guidance plan and Research guidance performance report

CRG is expected for students to take advanced and specialized research guidance that cannot be obtained solely through Hokkaido University’s education and research. Therefore, the research guidance plan of CRG students from Hokkaido University should include planned guidance contents, dispatch time, and period for the student, those are agreed with the counterpart teacher at the host university.

The research guidance performance report shall include the achievement and period at the host university in the column of “outlines of research guidance” and unique points which is occurred from CRG in the column of “remarks” at the report as well.

For incoming students, even though Hokkaido University does not issue a diploma by itself, the partner university’s diploma may include Hokkaido University’s name (or a joint certificate from both universities’ deans may be issued). Thus, the supervisor of the Hokkaido University shall make a Research guidance plan and a Research guidance performance report to prove for the incoming student attending the qualified academic program at Hokkaido University.

g. Online research guidance

If online research guidance proves to be significantly effective in ensuring fruitful outcomes for the CRG student, half of the required CRG period, which is described in article (2)-b above, could be conducted through online. Online research guidance is to be conducted as a supplementary measure before and/or after the on-site stay, while the primary research supervision should primarily take place in person at the host institution.

In case the online instruction period is included in the required CRG period, whether the CRG student is incoming or outgoing, it is necessary to describe the online guidance plan(contents and schedule, etc.) in the Research guidance plan. Also, it is required to describe achievement and

conducted period of online guidance at Research guidance performance report.

h. Others

- 1) The meanings of the terms “guidance” and “supervision” may be different by country and culture. However, the fundamental philosophy of CRG, which is promoted by Hokkaido University, aims not only to provide simply thesis guidance but also to help graduate students cultivate important behaviors and attitudes as researchers, including daily habits in the laboratory. It is crucial to share the understanding of the fundamental philosophy of Hokkaido University’s CRG when negotiating with partner institutions.
- 2) Matters not covered in this document shall be determined through consultation with partner universities. However, for students who will be awarded degrees through CRG, it must be noted that they are required to comply with the relevant regulations, including the Hokkaido University Graduate School Regulations.

3. Double Degree Programs (DDP) at Hokkaido University

(1) The definition of DD program

Academic degrees separately conferred on students participating in educational programs on the same academic degree level established separately by Hokkaido University and an overseas university, when they have satisfied the requirements for graduation or completion of a program at each university through the credit transfer and other systems.

(2) Basic system

a. Enrollment status of students and tuition fees

- 1) Since academic degrees are conferred on students who have completed the curricula of both universities, students shall be enrolled in both universities as regular students. However, students shall be formally enrolled in the single university to which they originally belong (hereinafter referred to as a “home university”).
- 2) Students to be admitted shall be selected in accordance with the admission policy of the host university.
- 3) While it is desirable for tuition fees to be only paid to the home university by exchanging a memorandum to prevent tuition fees from being collected by both universities, arrangements for tuition fees shall be made in consultation with the partner university before the decision.

b. Supervision system and the period of research supervision

Relevant graduate schools shall build a research supervision system that allows students in the master’s or doctoral degree program to receive research supervision from teaching staff of both universities. Each university shall appoint a chief supervisor and sub-supervisor(s).

The period for which Hokkaido University students in the master’s degree program receive research supervision at the partner university shall not exceed one year.

c. Academic degree examination method

The number of theses submitted for academic degree examination shall be two in principle, and the thesis examination shall be conducted by each university. Only if approved in consultation with the partner university, students can submit only one thesis to be examined by both universities. In this case, the graduate school shall deeply discuss the feasibility for the quality assurance of the academic degree beyond a doubt.

Both universities shall actively accept supervisors from the partner university as examiners to review the theses in graduate schools. Completion accreditation tests (e.g. oral test of thesis examination) for master's or doctoral students shall be conducted in an appropriate language in both universities, and academic degrees from each university shall be conferred on the students in accordance with the regulations of each university. Only if one thesis is submitted and a joint thesis examination is conducted with the attendance of teaching staff from the partner university and Hokkaido University (at least two members from each university), the examination may be carried out on a single occasion. In a joint thesis examination for students who originally belong to Hokkaido University as a home university, the chief examiner must be a teaching staff of Hokkaido University.

*The joint thesis examination mentioned here refers to an examination in an academic degree examination committee meeting, and does not include a preliminary examination incidental to the academic degree examination committee meeting. The method and procedure of an academic degree examination shall be subject to the regulations of each university.

d Credit approval and requirements for completion

- 1) Credits for subjects that students have studied at both universities shall be awarded in consideration of the educational effects of the classes and necessary academic workload outside classes, among other things, in accordance with their categories.
- 2) The number of credits earned at both universities can be mutually counted as the number of credits required for completion at each university. For credit transfer conversion, refer to Manual for Credit Transfer with Overseas Universities (February 2015, Executive Office for Education Reform and Office of International Affairs).
- 3) To earn academic degrees from both universities, students must satisfy requirements for completion in the curricula of both universities, including taking courses provided at individual universities.
- 4) The conferment of academic degrees at Hokkaido University shall be subject to the Hokkaido University General Rules of Graduate Schools and the Hokkaido University Regulations Concerning Academic Degrees.

e. Conclusion of agreements and memorandums

To ensure the stable and continuous implementation of the educational program, an inter-university academic exchange agreement or a departmental academic exchange agreement shall be signed before concluding a memorandum which is necessary for the implementation of the DD program. The memorandum shall include the content and implementation method of the educational program, the system for supervising students, and arrangements for tuition and other

fees. A memorandum for each student shall also be concluded in consultation with the partner university to confirm individual matters related to the exchange of students.

If a DD program is implemented in the doctoral degree program, the partner university shall be informed that the outlines of doctoral theses submitted for degrees conferred by Hokkaido University and summaries of thesis examination results will be published online within three months of the date of conferment, with the full text of the theses within one year, in accordance with the Regulations Concerning Academic Degrees.

f. Research guidance plan and Research guidance performance report

The research guidance performance report shall include the achievement and conducted period of research guidance at the host university in the column of “outlines of research guidance” of the report.

g. Others

- 1) Matters other than those specified here shall be determined in consultation with the partner university. DD in this document refers to a program with overseas universities but not with domestic universities.
- 2) Since no DD program is currently being implemented in the undergraduate schools of Hokkaido University, this document was prepared with the DD programs for master's and doctoral students in mind. Accordingly, b and c above as well as Reference 1 and Reference 2 below do not apply to the DD program in the undergraduate course.

- 3) If the DDP student satisfies the requirement for the above-described CRG, the words “under a cooperative research guidance agreement with ○○ University” may be added to the diploma issued by Hokkaido University in consultation with the partner university. When the words adding diploma, the agreement shall state the requirements. The requirements shall comply with the requirements of the above-described CRG.