1. **Introduction**

   1.1 A split-site PhD is defined as a PhD which leads to a University of Southampton award and involves research students being fully registered as University of Southampton research students whilst spending a significant period of their research away from the University, at another approved organisation, which will normally be overseas. All split-site PhDs require a formal agreement between the University and the partner organisation(s). The split-site PhD is used to increase collaborative research and develop international partnerships. Split-site PhDs are regarded as Collaborative Provision and are subject to the University’s Collaborative Provision Policy.

   1.2 It may be appropriate to make individual research student arrangements, which permit a research student to undertake some of their research at an approved location away from the University, for example for research students based in industry. These are not referred to as split-site PhDs as they do not involve institution-to-institution agreements.

   1.3 There are other arrangements which offer mobility to research students, including students undertaking field work or other specific visits away from the University. Whilst these types of arrangements may fall under the University’s Collaborative Provision Policy, they should not be seen as split-site PhD.

2. **Principles of split-site provision**

   2.1 There should be a nominated lead academic at the University of Southampton responsible for a particular split-site arrangement. This individual would usually be a member of the supervisory team and would work closely with the International Office.

   2.2 Split-site PhD arrangements should be made with institutions of good academic standing, which can provide an excellent environment for the University’s research students.

   2.3 Split-site PhD arrangements should be reviewed regularly, at least every five years.

   2.4 There should be a written agreement for all split-site arrangements, setting out the rights and responsibilities of the research student, the University of Southampton, and the partner institution(s).

   2.5 All provision should be in line with the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision.

3. **How to approve a split-site PhD**

   3.1 Split-site PhDs are subject to the University’s usual collaborative approval mechanisms and the University’s Collaborative Provision Policy provides the framework in which split-site PhDs are approved. The approval process is based on the assumption that the Faculty Director of the Graduate School in the relevant Faculty has been informed and is supportive of a split-site PhD proposal.
Contact the International Office or Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team

3.2 International split-site PhD arrangements should be discussed with the International Office, which will be able to give specific guidance on a prospective partner and its educational system. For UK based proposals, the Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team (QSAT) should be contacted.

Due Diligence

3.3 Due Diligence should be completed on the partner institution. Due Diligence Templates are available: these should be completed and checked by a Due Diligence Approval Panel prior to approval of an arrangement. To aid in this process, there is a standard letter (available from QSAT) to send to prospective partners which provides information on the University of Southampton and asks the prospective partner to confirm a number of details on their financial, legal and insurance status. Please see the Collaborative Provision Policy for further information.

Site Visit

3.4 A visit to the prospective partner institution must be undertaken by the School. The Site Visit Checklist should be used. Above all, the site visit should be used to assure the University that research students studying a PhD will continue to work in an environment reflecting the University’s Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision and the University’s Regulations for Research Degrees.

Risk Assessment

3.5 A risk assessment, using the University’s Risk Assessment Form, should be completed by the School.

Approval

3.6 Split-site PhD arrangements are approved by Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC). Further additions to the split-site arrangement, completed under the ‘Annexe 1’ part of the agreement, can be approved by School Programmes Committee (SPC) (with decisions notified to AQSC).

4. Drafting an Agreement

4.1 A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) should be signed at institutional level by the President and Vice-Chancellor and the partner institution.

4.2 For split-site arrangements involving cohorts of research students at an overseas institution, the MoA will be drafted, based on a template, by the International Office. However, no research students will be admitted onto a University of Southampton PhD until an Individual Doctoral Agreement is signed (Annexe 3 to the MoA).

4.3 After the initial arrangement, individual arrangements by the School and the partner institution are then catered for by completion and signature of the Individual Doctoral Agreement in Annexe 3 to the MoA, which is incorporated, on signature, into the overarching MoA. The Individual Doctoral Agreement covers the arrangements for the supervision of each individual research student.

5. Operation

Residence

5.1 The University's minimum residence requirement at Southampton for research candidates is 12 months (not necessarily over a continuous time period). Although this is a minimum period, Schools may feel it is appropriate to make the time spent in Southampton longer. Exact timings for periods spent at Southampton should be agreed at the outset but should normally include:

- A period at the beginning of the degree (to include induction)
- Confirmation of doctoral candidature
- Final examination period - including the viva voce.
Admissions
5.2 All admissions information and other arrangements, including for induction, must be available to research students and members of the supervisory team at both Southampton and the partner institution/organisation.

Enrolment
5.3 Research students should enrol annually with their School in Southampton. Research students may also need to ‘register’ temporarily with the partner institution if this is a requirement by that institution whilst studying away from Southampton.

Fees
5.4 Usually, the following model of fees applies:

- For the time spent at Southampton: The annual full-time fee for international PhD research students will apply (attendance in Southampton must be for a minimum of 12 months in total). The fee will be charged pro-rata in any one year.
- For the time spent at the partner institution: The annual fee to be paid to the University of Southampton will be at a reduced rate.

5.5 Any fee which may also be payable to the partner institution for the provision of supervisory support and the use of facilities during the period(s) of study away from Southampton would also need to be negotiated with the partner institution. This would be an arrangement between the School, the research student, and the partner institution.

6. Research and transferable skills training

6.1 All research students are expected to undergo a training needs analysis, or equivalent (see the University’s Regulations for Research Degrees).

6.2 Arrangements for where and when this is to be carried out should be agreed at the outset of the research student’s programme and stated in the Individual Doctoral Agreement (Annexe 3 of the MoA). Once the student’s research and transferable skills training needs have been identified it should be clearly set out in writing where and when any training will take place (i.e. at Southampton or at the partner institution/organisation), and, if relevant, when it is to be assessed.

7. Supervision arrangements

7.1 Supervision arrangements should be clearly specified. The supervisory team should be based at Southampton, with an additional named contact(s) at the partner institution. Composition of the supervisory team should comply with established criteria as set out in the Regulations for Research Degrees, together with the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision. In addition, consideration must be given to the level of input from the partner institution/organisation and this should be clearly defined at the outset.

7.2 The timing of, and arrangements for, supervisory visit(s) must be agreed at the start of the research student’s programme. There should also be regular contact between research student and main supervisor (by email, phone, videoconference etc.) whilst the research student is away. It is also expected that the partner institution will provide any additional sources of support to the research student if needed.

7.3 Supervisory requirements and the responsibilities of the supervisory team should comply with the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision, taking into account any special or alternative arrangements which may need to be made in the light of any supervision being provided at the partner institution. It is also important that research students are aware of their responsibilities as set out in the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision and that any special arrangements are put in place to enable them to carry out these responsibilities as required at the partner institution/organisation.

8. Monitoring research student progress and formal reviews

8.1 It is the responsibility of the School, through the supervisory team, to ensure that research student progress is monitored and supported and that formal review mechanisms are in place in accordance
with the expectations of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision. Arrangements for progress monitoring and formal reviews should be agreed at the outset in writing, in consultation with the partner institution/organisation and with the research student, and set out in the Individual Doctoral Agreement in Annexe 3 of the MoA.

8.2 Effective supervision, and good organisation and planning on the part of both the research student and members of the supervisory team, are fundamental to the success of a split-site research degree. It is therefore particularly important that informal monitoring and formal progress review meetings are carried out regularly, according to a pre-arranged schedule. Informal supervision meetings and formal review meetings should be fully documented, involving appropriate communication between supervisors as necessary, so that it is clear to all concerned how, when and where any problems or issues arising are to be addressed, and any subsequent actions taken. As with all research students, PGR Tracker (or equivalent system) should be used to record all progression review meetings.

9. **Confirmation of PhD status/Upgrade/Transfer from MPhil to PhD**

9.1 The confirmation/transfer/upgrade process should take place in accordance with the Code of Practice for Degree Research Candidature and Supervision. The expectation is that this process will take place in Southampton.

10. **Examination of the PhD**

10.1 It is expected that the research student will submit their thesis to their School in Southampton and that the viva voce will also take place in Southampton. The research student will be required to give notification of intention to submit in the normal way (i.e. no later than two months prior to the date of submission). Examination arrangements and the examination process should be carried out as set out in the Regulations for Research Degrees and the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision.

10.2 The viva voce will take place in Southampton and the School should ensure that arrangements are communicated well in advance to all concerned including the partner institution. In particular, sufficient time should be allowed to enable the supervisory contact from the partner institution to make arrangements to attend the viva voce should this be requested by the research student (see the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision).

11. **Award**

11.1 On successful completion, the research degree will be awarded by the University of Southampton.

12. **Complaints and Appeals**

12.1 In accordance with normal practice, research students and supervisors should be made aware of the procedures and processes for addressing complaints and appeals. The University of Southampton’s procedures should also be invoked if a complaint or an academic appeal is made in connection with the research student’s period of study at the partner institution.

13. **Renewal**

13.1 Split-site PhD arrangements should be renewed periodically, and not more than every five years. Renewing a PhD requires the following process:

**Informal discussions about the renewal**

13.2 In the first instance, discuss the need for renewal with the Faculty Director of Graduate School, and the International Office (if international) or QSAT (if UK based). If there is support for renewing the agreement, proceed to the due diligence.
Due Diligence

13.3 Due Diligence should be renewed on the partner institution. Due Diligence Templates are available: these should be completed and checked by a Due Diligence Approval Panel prior to renewal of the arrangement. To aid in this process, there is a standard letter (available from QSAT) to send to prospective partners which provides information on the University of Southampton and asks the prospective partner to confirm a number of details on their financial, legal and insurance status. Please see the Collaborative Provision Policy for further information.

Site Visit

13.4 A visit to the partner institution must usually be undertaken by the School at the point of the renewal. The Site Visit Checklist should be used. Above all, the site visit should be used to assure the University that research students studying a PhD are continuing to work in an environment supportive of the University's Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision.

Risk Assessment

13.5 A risk assessment, using the University's Risk Assessment Form, should be completed by the School.

Approval of renewal

13.6 Renewals of Split-site PhD arrangements should be submitted to AQSC for approval.