

Policy of the Doctoral Committee of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences on “Interdisciplinary” doctorates (approved by the Doctoral Committee on 29/09/2016).

The promotion of interdisciplinary research is valuable. The recognition gained by a researcher via a joint doctorate can provide added value. On other hand, such research should not lead to erosion of the doctorate of one of the disciplines mentioned in the joint doctorate.

When it is notified of interdisciplinary research, the doctoral committee has two questions to answer:

1. Can this doctoral project be considered as an interdisciplinary project?
2. What will the minimum criteria that the final doctoral thesis will need to meet be if the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences is the main faculty or a partner faculty and the "Doctor of Health Sciences" title is part of the joint title?

Ad 1:

The criteria to be used for recognising an interdisciplinary project are listed below (by analogy with the criteria used by the Special Research Fund).

1. The two disciplines and expertise brought together in the search proposal are sufficiently far apart. Neither discipline should be defined too narrowly. To determine whether the disciplines of the two sponsors are "sufficiently" far apart, the FWO (Scientific Research Fund) discipline codes are first compared indicatively. A check is then done to determine whether the codes supplied effectively correspond to the content of the project proposal. The evaluation of the difference between the disciplines and expertise concerned can be expressed **as A) highly different from each other, B) moderately different from each other, C) insufficiently different from each other.**

2. The contribution of expertise, knowledge and methodologies from each of the two disciplines is substantial and strictly necessary to carry out the research project successfully. The research proposal can only be carried out through an integrated, concerted approach. The research cannot be divided into two mono-disciplinary research lines that can each be performed under the supervision of two separate sponsors. One discipline cannot be a supporting discipline for the other. The evaluation of the contribution of expertise, knowledge and methodologies of each discipline (and the need for this contribution) can be expressed **as A) balanced, B) less markedly balanced, or C) unbalanced**

3. Output: the insights gained through completion of the proposed research should result in new scientific knowledge in both disciplines or in an expansion of knowledge into a new (emerging) discipline. The evaluation of the manner in which the intended results will contribute to an expansion of knowledge is expressed (in descending order of importance) **as A) expansion of knowledge into a new (emerging) discipline or a substantial expansion of knowledge in each of the two disciplines or B) the expansion of knowledge in each of the two disciplines is less balanced, C) the expansion of knowledge in one (or both) disciplines is insufficient (compared to the expansion of knowledge in the other discipline)**



The project is found to be interdisciplinary when on average at most 1 B and no C is given by the "interdisciplinary work group of the Doctoral Committee".

Ad 2

- If our faculty is the **principal faculty** we should require that our faculty regulations are followed and the minimum publication criteria in force within our faculty are met.

- If our faculty is the **partner faculty**

Concerning compliance with faculty regulations: follow those of the partner faculty

Concerning publication criteria: require at least 1 A1 publication with the doctoral student as sole first author on one topic with a clear link to the faculty of medicine and health sciences.

