

For Immediate Release



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AUB signs Doctoral Cotutelle Agreement **with Paris Descartes University**

In its first such academic collaboration with a university in Europe, the American University of Beirut (AUB) signed a cotutelle agreement with Paris Descartes University (L'Université Paris Descartes, UPD) allowing joint doctoral degree programs at both institutions. In this regard, AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri and UPD President Frederic Dardel signed an agreement and Memorandum of Understanding in the presence of higher administration and deans from both universities.

According to the cotutelle program, graduate students, PhD candidates in this case, will spend their candidacy between the two partner institutions through jointly supervised degrees. Following the successful completion of the graduation requirements at both institutions and the candidate's program of study, each institution confers the doctoral degree upon the candidate and issues the appropriate PhD degree stating that the doctorate was completed under cotutelle arrangement.

The agreement came following a connection that was established by the Lebanese National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS), represented by its Secretary General Dr. Moueen Hamze, in August 2016, and communication with Dean of Basic and Medical Sciences Chabel Masaad at UPD, renowned for the high quality of its training and research.

“We already have a lot of informal relationships with AUB and Lebanon,” President Dardel told us. “The Lebanese are the 5th nationality of foreign students in our university, we have a lot of exchange between us, one of our Deans, Dr. Charbel Masaad, is of Lebanese origin; and we have common scientific and educational interests; and so, today is one way of strengthening this exchange and to make it a very good collaboration. We hope that this will foster collaboration between research groups and possibly go from this PhD exchange to the exchange of master's students as a next step.”

As a result of this partnership, faculty members and graduate students can choose to work on either campus to seek researchers in the partner campus with matching research interests, connect with each other, develop common research themes, secure funding, and set up the desired collaboration.

“Partnerships with reputable universities for graduate education enhances the student learning experience in both partnering institutions, encourages faculty to seek research partners abroad, and increases their chances to acquire research funds from international agencies,” said Dr. Rabih Talhouk, Chairperson of the Graduate Council, which will work with its counterpart at UPD and facilitate communication between researchers of concerned doctoral programs in both institutions. “Put together, one quickly realizes that this is in the heart of AUB’s mission ‘to provide excellence in education and to participate in the advancement of knowledge through research’.”

Realizing the value of such partnerships between reputable institutions in enhancing their graduate education and research programs, AUB has previously established a cotutelle agreement with the University of Waterloo, Canada, for a doctoral student at AUB’s Faculty of Engineering and Architecture and aims to look into further such agreements.

Upon establishing the partnership agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed for educational cooperation and exchange between AUB’s Faculty of Medicine and UPD, enhancing collaboration between the biomedical programs in both campuses. The signed partnership agrees on faculty exchange, as well as master’s and PhD graduate student exchange. It aims to lay down the framework for the technical, educational, and scientific cooperation between the two universities in the fields of Biomedical Sciences, enabling them to tighten their scientific collaboration and lay the foundation for potential joint research and graduate teaching programs. AUB aims to extend this collaboration to other faculties and other partner universities.

The cotutelle agreement encourages and supports faculty members to develop and strengthen their research networks and enhances their chances of seeking collaborative research funding. It exposes PhD candidates on the other hand to different educational environments, enriching their training experiences, and encouraging them to develop professional links that will increase their career prospects internationally.

“AUB is a world-class university and therefore we should partner with other world-class universities, in their areas of strength and ours,” President Fadlo Khuri told us. “This is a key strategic partnership. For us to partner with a premier university in France strengthens the ties not only between AUB and UPD but also between Lebanon and France in an area of both substance and depth.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 130 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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