



Joint Doctoral Degree Program

Between

Indian Institute of Technology Mandi

and

**Sardar Vallabhbhai
National Institute of Technology, Surat
(SVNIT)**

**AGREEMENT FOR JOINT DEGREE PROGRAM:
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

Between

**SARDAR VALLABHBHAI
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, SURAT
(SVNIT)**

and

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY MANDI

AGREEMENT FOR JOINT DEGREE PROGRAM: Doctor of Philosophy

THIS AGREEMENT is made on 21/03/2023

BETWEEN:

1. SVNIT, Surat, an educational institution created by an Act of Parliament and having its principal address at **Surat**.

And

2. INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY MANDI, an educational institution created by an Act of Parliament and having its principal address at The Indian Institute of Technology Mandi, Kamand, Himachal Pradesh, 781075, India ("IIT Mandi").

The expression Institution shall mean either IIT Mandi or SVNIT, Surat **Party** means a party to this Agreement and **Parties** means both parties to this Agreement.

WHEREAS:

1. On 21/03/2023 the Parties entered into this Agreement to develop academic and student exchange through a Joint Degree Program (JDP) of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) whereby students who successfully complete the JDP will be awarded a joint degree for the one thesis with the testamurs/certificates from each Institution clearly indicating the joint nature of the degrees as outlined in Clause 13.
2. By entering into this Agreement, the Parties agree to offer Joint Degree Programs at PhD level in all areas of research in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in this Agreement.

ABBREVIATIONS

ERP: External Registration Program

JDP: Joint Degree Program

PhD: Doctor of Philosophy

DC: Doctoral Advisory Committee

HoD: Head of the Department

JASC: Joint Admissions Sub-committee

NOW IT IS HEREBY AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

1. JOINT DEGREE PROGRAM STRUCTURE:

1.1. The program offers PhD students enrolled in both institutions the chance to collaborate on a multidisciplinary research project with faculty members and research teams from IIT Mandi and SVNIT, Surat as well as to take advantage of the facilities and professional development opportunities offered by both institutions.

1.2. Candidates have a "Home Institution" where they begin their studies and spend the majority of time. The expectation is that candidates will spend a minimum of 12 months at the other, "Host" Institution; the timing and duration of this will depend on the program of research but in general will be in the second or third year of the degree. Travel to and study at the Host Institution will be subject to the usual requirements of the institute.

1.3. As a condition of enrolment on the PhD JDP, candidates are required to:

- Spend a minimum of one year* (two semesters) enrolled at each institution
*Candidates registered as part-time PhD or under External Registration program need to spend the minimum residential requirement criteria of both the institute as mentioned in their ordinances and regulations.
- Undertake a program of progress monitoring and examination that meets the requirements of both institutions
- Comply with the rules, regulations, policies, codes and procedures of both institutions
- Write and submit a thesis for defense by oral examination at the home institution

1.4. Candidates for the PhD JDP will be enrolled in a PhD program in parallel at both institutions. The supervisory team will comprise academics from both institutions who will provide guidance and support throughout the doctoral program. Candidates will benefit from the research community, networking, and collaborations of the IIT Mandi – SVNIT, Surat. Through enrolment at both institutions, candidates will have access to services and support provided at IIT Mandi and SVNIT, Surat including a variety of professional and personal development opportunities for researchers.

1.5. Candidates may have already commenced a PhD at their Home Institution prior to converting in the joint PhD program through enrolment at the Host Institution. In this case, the candidate will be counted from the start date of the original enrolment at the home institution.

1.6. The primary supervisor shall be from the Home Institution. There must be a Joint supervisor from the Host Institution.

1.7. The PhD JDP includes a tailored program of progress monitoring to fulfil the requirements of both institutions. On successful completion of the program requirements, candidates will be awarded a PhD degree jointly by both the Institutions.

2. PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

2.1. The Program is governed by Deanery of Academics of both the institute. The Dean (Academics) will ensure the Program requirements of each institution are upheld and advise on candidature related matters.

2.2. The Program will be operationalized and managed on a day-to-day basis by the office of the Office of Dean, Academics at IIT Mandi and the Office of Dean, Academic Affairs at SVNIT, Surat

- IIT Mandi – Associate Dean (Research) (Email: adresearch@iitmandi.ac.in)
- SVNIT Surat- Associate Dean (Academic) (Email: adean_acad@svnit.ac.in)

3. APPLICATION AND ADMISSIONS

3.1. The admissions process will be managed by the IIT Mandi–SVNIT Surat Joint Admissions Sub-committee (JASC) constituted at the School/Department/Centre level and according to each Institution's admissions procedure. Candidates must meet the admissions requirements of both institutions. The eligibility criteria for enrolling in a joint PhD program will be same as that of a regular PhD program/ERP of the individual institute. The details of the same can be found in the PhD ordinance of the individual institute.

- IIT Mandi: https://iitmandi.ac.in/academics/files/Ordinances_phd_mtech.pdf
- SVNIT Surat: https://www.svnit.ac.in/web/rules_regulations.php

3.2. JASC will release a call for PhD research projects from prospective supervisors (typically in February and August each year, for the August and January intakes, respectively).

3.3. The projects will be selected on a competitive review basis by the Dean (Academics), based on criteria such as project funding, expected outcomes, supervision capacity and expertise and industry support/involvement.

3.4. Each project on the PhD JDP will have a formal project agreement in place between the two institutions. The format for this agreement is attached as Annexure A.

3.5. The project agreement needs to be signed by the joint supervisors, endorsed by the respective School/Centre/Department Chairs/HoDs and approved by both the institute

3.6. Successful projects will be advertised on both the institute's website to attract potential PhD candidates.

3.7. All applicants will be expected to apply through an online admissions portal. Applicants will be directed to this portal from both the Institute's academic affairs/Admissions website.

3.8. As part of the applications process, applicants may choose up to N projects (where N is normally 2 or 3). Supervisors from both IIT Mandi and SVNIT Surat will be provided access to this portal to view applications. Each project will specify the base location (IIT Mandi or SVNIT Surat) where funding is available for the project and applicants would also be able to provide their preference for the project.

3.9. Detailed applications from the selected applicants (and aligned with specific projects that have been chosen) will then be reviewed by project supervisors. Based on their own assessments, some (or all) of these applicants for each project will be interviewed by the IIT Mandi and SVNIT Surat supervisors of the project. This interview can be telephonic, *via* videoconferencing, or through a face-to-face meeting, as decided by the supervisors. Supervisors will rank candidates and provide a recommendation of a maximum of M preferences (where M is usually 2 or 3) for their projects to the JASC.

3.10. Shortlisted applicants will undergo either a written test or a joint interview or both with the JASC. Note that JASC will look at applicant project preferences and also comments from the supervisors subsequent to their conversations with the applicants.

3.11. This admissions process will be reviewed periodically on recommendations that JASC makes to Dean (Academics) for its consideration and approval.

3.12. After each selection round, JASC will submit its recommendations to the Dean (Academics) who will consider these recommendations and forward the recommendations to the Chairman (Senate) of both the institute for approval. Successful applicants will be issued an offer letter by the Host institute, which will be based on the standard offer letters from IIT Mandi or SVNIT Surat. The offer letter should include information on the JDP and the project title/area for which the candidate is recruited, as well as comply with all requirements set forth by the two institutes.

3.13. Offers will always be “conditional offers of candidature”. These conditional offers will only be confirmed subject to receipt of original certified transcripts and further documentary evidence as requested by JASC. Students will be required to accept their offer in line with deadlines noted in their offer letter. It is not possible for students to defer commencement of their program; if they are unable to commence on the date stated in their offer letter, they must decline the offer and apply in a future round.

3.14. **Lateral Entry:** For students already at IIT Mandi or SVNIT Surat, they should be enrolled for at least 6 months prior to registration and should include in their submission an approved NOC from IIT Mandi or SVNIT Surat respectively. These candidates do not need to face the JASC for interview. Their applications will be directly put to the Dean (Academics) for consideration and approval.

4. PROJECT AGREEMENTS

4.1. Both the institutes shall enter into a ‘Research Project Title agreement’ for each individual project/student. This must be completed and signed before an unconditional offer of enrolment into the joint PhD program is made to each applicant under joint supervision. These agreements should detail the financial and resource requirements and intellectual property arrangements for each research project title. This should usually be initiated by the Home Institution using the template in the joint PhD agreement (Annexure A) at the time of releasing advertisement.

4.2. A risk assessment must be undertaken for each project by the supervisory team at each institution, according to their own requirements. In case, any of the supervisor leaves the parent institution due to any reason whatsoever, it will be the responsibility of that institution to arrange the replacement of supervisor from their own faculty. The outgoing faculty member (earlier supervisor) may act co-guide to the maximum possible extent.

5. FEES, SCHOLARSHIPS AND FUNDING

5.1. The JDP Scholar shall pay tuition fees only to their Home Institution throughout the duration of the JDP including the duration of study at the Partner Institution as per its fee structure.

5.2. Unless otherwise indicated, candidates who wish to be admitted onto the PhD JDP are entitled to receive fellowship meeting the eligibility criteria. The cost of fellowship will be borne by the Home Institute even during the candidate’s stay in the Host Institute. No tuition fee will be charged by the host institution. However, the student needs to bear

the boarding and lodging charges. Scholarships are awarded based on merit, and the value and conditions of any scholarship awarded will be in accordance with the terms and conditions of the awarding institution.

5.3. Applicants for the PhD JDP may hold any scholarship normally awarded by either institution, subject to the terms and conditions of that scholarship. The number of scholarships available each year and their eligibility may vary.

5.4. In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), both institutions agreed to support up to 15 PhD Joint Degree Program (JDP) scholarships from each university (2023-24). Each academic year's figures could be different. These scholarships are in addition to each institution's regular scholarship cycles and will not count toward a PhD students' specific faculty cap.

5.5. Regardless of the scholarship awarded, students on the joint PhD program will be personally responsible for the following expenses unless otherwise advised:

- Incidental fees and charges at either institution
- Accommodation and living expenses at either institution
- All personal expenses and non-compulsory additional fees at the host institution
- All debts incurred by candidates during their stay at either institution
- Any other debts incurred by candidates during the Joint PhD Program

6. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

6.1. A Doctoral Advisory Committee (DC) shall be set up for each JDP Scholar to support and monitor progress of the JDP Scholar throughout the candidature until the thesis has been submitted. The DC shall consist of the following members

1. Chair/Head of the School/Department of the Home Institute or his/her nominee	Chairperson
1. Supervisor from the Home institute	Member
2. Supervisor from the Host institute	Member
3. Co-supervisor (s), if any with justification	Member (s)
4. Subject Expert from the Home Institution	Member
5. Additional members may be appointed to meet the requirements	Members

6.2. In case any DC member goes on leave exceeding one-year duration, or resigns or retires from the respective Institution, the respective School/Department/Centre Chair/HoD shall nominate another member following their respective procedures.

6.3. The DC shall meet once a year through video conferencing/ electronic communication. Beyond four years from the time of registration in the program, the DC shall meet every six months until the JDP Scholar's thesis has been submitted in accordance with the rules and regulations of both the Institutions.

7. COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS

The JDP Scholar shall satisfy the minimum academic coursework requirements of the Home Institution. Additional courses may be taken when recommended by the DC. If a JDP scholar credits a course in one institution, the credits will be automatically transferred to the other institution and will be counted towards the degree requirement.

8. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION AND CONFIRMATION OF PHD CANDIDATURE

The JDP Scholar shall be required to meet the confirmation requirements at the end of the first year of the probationary PhD period (where applicable), and in addition, qualify the comprehensive examination satisfactorily to continue with the JDP. Otherwise, they shall no longer be eligible to participate in the JDP. The comprehensive examination will be as per the prevailing guidelines of the Home Institution.

9. PROGRESS MEETING / SYNOPSIS / THESIS

9.1. JDP Scholars shall normally follow the regulations stipulated by the Home Institution for monitoring their progress. However, submission of synopsis and submission and evaluation of the thesis shall be in line with the requirements of the home Institutions.

9.2. JDP Scholar shall present at least two open seminars in the Home as well as Host Institution. A joint seminar (*via* video conferencing) will also be acceptable.

10. TIME DURATION

10.1. The JDP regular scholar shall spend a minimum of one year at the Host Institution working under the supervision of the joint-supervisor(s). They may take additional courses at the Host Institution as recommended by the DC. The JDP part-time/ERP scholar must fulfil home institution guidelines for ERP student at individual institute.

Candidates registered as part-time PhD or under External Registration program need to spend the minimum residential requirement criteria of both the institute as mentioned in their respective ordinances and regulations.

10.2. As far as possible, the minimum and maximum (if applicable) duration of the program will be governed by the rules of both Institutions. In the event of an inconsistency in the durations, the longer duration will apply.

10.3. The JDP Scholar shall be entitled to the leave benefits (if any) that relate to the Institution at which the JDP Scholar is physically located when the leave is requested.

10.4. The JDP scholar is expected to complete their thesis within a maximum duration as prescribed in the ordinance and regulations of the home institute from the date of registration.

11. Ethics approval

All candidates must gain all necessary human, animal and biosafety ethics approvals from both institutions. If either institution does not have the necessary approvals processes, the other institution's approvals process will be used. Candidates will also need to be appropriately inducted in terms of Occupational Health and Safety and any other requirements necessary.

12. WITHDRAWAL AND TERMINATION OF CANDIDATURE

The prevailing regulation for withdrawal including cancellation and termination (for any approved reason, including unsatisfactory progress) of candidature at the JDP Scholars Home Institution shall normally apply in consultation with the Partner Institution. The Home Institution shall notify the Host Institution if the Home Institution intends to terminate the candidature under its policies or if the JDP Scholar has advised the Home Institution of their intention to withdraw from the JDP. In any event, the DC shall advise the JDP Scholar on an appropriate course of action to take, which would be in the best interest of the JDP Scholar.

13. THESIS REVIEW REPORTS & VIVA VOCE EXAMINATION

13.1. Evaluation of thesis by external examiners and conducting of the final *viva-voce* examination shall, in general, follow the processes and procedures of the Home Institution.

13.2. The language of the thesis and the *viva voce* examination shall be English.

14. AWARD OF DEGREE

Two separate degree certificates shall be awarded for the one-degree by the respective Institutions in line with their respective protocols/styles. The wording in both degree certificates must indicate unambiguously that the degree is being awarded jointly with the Partner Institution (by name) for the same thesis. Sample certificates are attached as Annexure B to this Agreement/document.

15. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, INVENTIONS AND INNOVATIONS

15.1. All intellectual property held by a Party prior to, or outside of, entering into this Agreement that is disclosed or introduced in connection with this Agreement and all materials in which such intellectual property is held, disclosed or introduced ("background intellectual property") shall remain the property of the Party introducing or disclosing it. However, that Party grants the JDP Scholar and/or the other Party a licence to use such intellectual property for any purpose associated with the JDP.

15.2. All rights, titles and interests in any studies, reports or materials, graphic or otherwise, prepared by the Home Institution or by the Partner Institution respectively, that is not background intellectual property or intellectual property created under clause 15.3, will belong to that Institution and may not be made use of except with that Institution's prior written consent.

15.3. Where the Institutions jointly develop intellectual property, inventions and innovations as a result of the research work of the JDP Scholar working under the supervision of the joint supervisors the terms with respect to title and exploitation of such intellectual property, inventions and innovations (including but not limited to trademarks and service marks, copyright, patents, know-how designs and confidential information on the subject of such intellectual property, inventions and innovations) will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis having due regard for each Institutions policies and governance requirements and the terms and conditions imposed by any individual funding agencies or grant-making organizations. The Parties preference for such case-by- case agreements will be that the intellectual property rights created in the course of the JDP will vest in each Institution in equal shares and that each Party may use such jointly-owned intellectual property for internal, non-commercial research and educational purposes. Save as aforesaid, nothing in this agreement shall be construed as a license or transfer or an obligation to enter into any further agreement with respect to intellectual property currently licensed to or belonging to either Institute.

15.4. Nothing in this Agreement will inhibit the right of a JDP Scholar to have their thesis examined and a copy of their thesis lodged in the library of each Institution (including a digital copy).

15.5. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in clause 14.3, each JDP Scholar shall own the copyright in his/her thesis.

15.6. The provisions of this clause 14 will survive beyond the termination of this Agreement

16. CONFIDENTIALITY

16.1. When receiving confidential information, the receiving Party must ensure that all employees, students or agents to whom the confidential information is disclosed are bound to keep the confidential information confidential and not to use the confidential information except for the JDP.

16.2. The obligations of confidentiality in this clause 15 do not apply to information which may be required to be disclosed by law, is in the public domain other than by breach of this Agreement or has been independently developed or obtained by the receiving Party.

16.3. Each Party agrees that personal information about JDP Scholars will be collected, managed, held, used, disclosed and transferred in accordance with the relevant privacy laws and policies applicable to that Party.

17. AMENDMENTS

This Agreement may be amended and supplemented in writing at any time by the mutual consent of the Parties in writing.

18. TERM OF AGREEMENT

18.1. This Agreement shall commence on the Effective Date and shall remain in force for a period of five (5) years. Thereafter, it shall renew itself automatically for successive periods of five (5) years unless either Party gives the other Party not less than six (6) months' notice in writing of its desire to terminate this Agreement, at any time during the initial or the relevant extended period.

18.2. Both Parties agree that in the event this Agreement is terminated for any reason, the Parties shall use their best endeavors to allow all JDP Scholars already enrolled in the JDP who are eligible to complete their candidature, to continue and complete the requirements for the JDP in which they are enrolled, and to be awarded the joint degree upon successful completion of the JDP. If it is not possible for a JDP Scholar to satisfy the requirements of and complete the JDP, the Parties shall endeavor to allow that JDP Scholar, at their election, to complete the requirements for a single PhD degree at the Home Institution subject to the requirements of the relevant Institution. The Parties agree that such a JDP Scholar shall be given credit for all relevant units previously undertaken by the JDP Scholar at the other Institution as part of the JDP in accordance with the policies and protocols of the Institution where the JDP Scholar will complete the requirements of their PhD.

18.3. If the Agreement is terminated and if the JDP Scholar continues their candidature either on a Joint degree basis or as a single PhD degree at one or other of the institutions, the Parties agree that the JDP Scholar shall continue to have access to the background intellectual property as described in clause 14.1 and confidential information to the extent *necessary for* the student to complete the JDP or a PhD at either Institution.

19. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Any dispute arising under or in connection with this Agreement which cannot be resolved by amicable discussions between the Parties shall be referred to the Director of the respective Parties or their nominees for resolution.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties hereto have caused this Agreement to be duly executed on the day and year first above mentioned.

Annexure A: A1-Project Agreement-IIT Mandi

A2- Project Agreement- SVNIT Surat

Annexure B: Degree certificate format from both the Parties for JDP