



# Thesis Charter

Paris Sciences et Lettres University

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## 1. Introduction

The working methods for preparing a PSL doctoral thesis at one of its member institutions depend first of all<sup>1</sup> on a mutual agreement between the doctoral student and the thesis director, concerning both the subject matter and the working conditions required to do the research. Therefore, the thesis director and the doctoral student respectively have rights and duties with regard to high achievement levels.

This charter sets out those reciprocal duties reflecting the code of ethics that underpins applicable regulations and tried practices, respecting the diversity of the disciplines at the Paris Sciences et Lettres Research University (PSL). The purpose is to guarantee high-quality scientific research.

This charter concerns the preparation of a thesis under the auspices of a doctoral school accredited or co-accredited by PSL. Such accreditation must comply with evaluation and academic training conditions applicable to the doctoral school where the student is registered. Furthermore, the doctoral training is part of the general framework of the PSL doctorate policy which is coordinated and implemented by the PSL Doctoral College which regroups all doctoral schools co-accredited by the latter as well as its doctoral programs. The PSL Doctoral College contributes to the sharing of experience, good practices and promotion of PSL doctorates.

When registering for the first year of a thesis program, the doctoral student signs this charter along with the thesis director, in compliance with the principles set forth below and the code of ethics applying to the field of research<sup>2</sup>.

Students under doctoral co-supervision have the same rights and must meet the same conditions set out in the agreement entered into for this purpose.

This charter was drafted in accordance with the Decree dated 25 May 2016 specifying the national framework for training and the conditions for the awarding of a doctoral degree (NOR (French standard): MENS1611139A), and sets forth the conditions governing the PSL Doctoral College.

In application of this charter, an individual training agreement signed upon the initial registration of the student by all the parties concerned, sets forth the conditions for each thesis. This agreement may be amended if necessary at each re-registration.

## 2. General Organization of the Doctoral Thesis

### 2.1. A doctoral thesis is a step forward in a personal project and a professional career

Preparing a thesis is training both *for* and *through* research. The goals and standards required must be clearly defined, as part of a personal life project and a professional career. This implies clearly defining the objectives and the specific means of achieving them.

The management team (director of the Doctoral school, head of the research unit or team, and the head of the doctoral program) inform the candidate of possible funding opportunities to finance a thesis (a "doctoral contract", private company financing – in particular CIFRE agreements – or financing by regional governments or associations, among others)..

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<sup>1</sup> This agreement assumes that the doctoral student's host laboratory, where the thesis director teaches, is able to admit the student; this aspect is not addressed herein, nor are relationships with the student's doctoral school.

<sup>2</sup> See "Un guide pour promouvoir une recherche intègre et responsable", A Guide for Promoting Ethical and Responsible Research" by the Ethical Committee at CNRS (<http://www.cnrs.fr/comets/spip.php?article91>)

Once registered with a doctoral school, the student must comply with its regulations and obligations, particularly as concerns courses, conferences, seminars, etc. (the information on these activities is distributed by the doctoral school and, if applicable, the head of the doctoral program concerned).

The student receives information about academic and non-academic opportunities in his or her field. The doctoral school laboratory and the host laboratory make available national statistics on the future of young doctoral graduates and information about the careers of their doctoral graduates.

The doctoral candidate should specify the professional career desired as soon as possible. The student should be concerned with life after the doctorate, and manage the doctoral work in such a manner as to facilitate future career opportunities. The doctoral staff is there to help the student clarify his or her career ambitions, to study feasibility, to advise, and to help the student through administrative processes and career searches. Depending on the discipline and the research center, it could be useful to offer an array of additional training programs such as a teaching experience, a corporate internship for a few weeks, working in a laboratory abroad, and so forth.

## **2.2. Subject Matter and Feasibility of the Thesis**

Registration for the doctoral program shall specify the thesis subject, the context, the host environment (research laboratory and, if applicable, the research team) as well as the appropriate doctoral program for the subject (Sacre, ITI or others).

The subject matter of the doctoral thesis should constitute valid training, lead to an original body of work, and be feasible in the allotted time frame. The thesis subject is formally agreed on by the student and the thesis director at the time of registration. The thesis director, with recognized expertise in the field of research concerned, should help the student to uncover the unexploited aspect of the thesis subject in the scientific context and verify its relevance. The director should also ensure the student shows a spirit of innovation.

The thesis director must define and ensure the means necessary to accomplish the work. To do this, the doctoral student must be fully part of the hosting research laboratory, where he or she has access to the resources required for such research (for instance: documentation resources, equipment, computer technology, documentation, access to seminars, colloquia and conferences, the presentation of his or her work in seminars, conferences and colloquia, etc.). Host staff members require the student to comply with rules concerning scientific ethics, and to respect the collective environment they all share. The doctoral student is actively engaged in the life of the host laboratory where he or she is being trained, but cannot be assigned tasks that interfere with the progress of the thesis.

The doctoral student has a commitment to a given time frame and working pace. He or she must inform the thesis director of the progress made on the thesis and any difficulties encountered. All doctoral students must demonstrate initiative in their research work.

## **2.3. Supervision and Monitoring of the Thesis**

The doctoral student is entitled to personal supervision by the thesis director, who shall consent to devote a significant amount of time to that purpose. Regular and frequent scheduled meetings are necessary, to be set out in the initial agreement and maintained throughout the thesis work.

The doctoral student agrees to submit as many progress reports as necessary to the thesis director, and to make presentations of the thesis work in internal seminars or outside the host institution. The director undertakes to follow the work progress regularly and to consider new directions for the thesis in light of the results achieved. Up to completion of the thesis, the director must inform the student of any positive observations or objections or criticism of the work.

An individual monitoring committee, the rules for the composition and organization of which are defined by the doctoral schools, monitors the progress of the doctoral training in accordance with the doctoral thesis charter and the individual training agreement. In an interview with the doctoral student it reviews the conditions of the training and the progress of the student's research. It makes recommendations and communicates the minutes of the interview with the director of the doctoral school to the student and the thesis director. The committee safeguards against any form of conflict, discrimination or harassment.

## **2.4. Duration of the Thesis Work**

As in the spirit of all doctoral studies, under the law and in the interest of the doctoral student, a thesis is a research process subject to a schedule and programmed deadlines. Specifically, working on a thesis implies annual renewal of the student's registration at the school. Such renewal must comply with assigned deadlines, with exceptions made for duly documented reasons.

Under applicable regulations (Article 14 of the decree dated 25 May 2016), the time allotted to complete a thesis is three years full-time equivalent. In other cases the time allotted to complete a thesis may be prolonged no more than six years. Pursuant to a reasoned request submitted by the doctoral student, an annual extension may be granted in the name of PSL by the director of the institution where the thesis is accomplished, on the recommendation of the director of the doctoral school, following the proposal of the thesis director and the approval of the monitoring committee.

## **2.5. Thesis Publication and Promotion**

The quality and impact of the thesis can be measured by publications, patents and industry reports involving the work, be it the thesis itself or articles published during or after preparation of the manuscript. The position of the doctoral student among his or her co-workers should reflect the student's investment in the work, in so far as it is compatible with the practices proper to each discipline. Rules pertaining to publication and industrial property shall be those applying to the host laboratory or the institution where the thesis is carried out.

As an author, the doctoral student is solely responsible for the content of the thesis. In particular, the student must be sure to secure all authorizations to reproduce excerpts of works from other authors appearing in the text. Such authorizations must be requested from authors or publishers. As an exception to this rule, only short citations as defined in the French law governing intellectual property (in French, *Code de propriété intellectuelle*), shall be authorized, crediting the author or the source.

## 2.6. After Defense of the Thesis

A diploma or proof of the diploma shall be delivered only after filing the final version of the thesis manuscript and documents submitted for defense and distribution of the thesis.

To provide future doctoral students with information on job opportunities, all doctoral graduates will respond to all requests for information from the doctoral school concerning their professional careers for several years after the doctoral degree is awarded. Such information may be transmitted through responding to survey questionnaires sent by the doctoral school or the doctoral college to the doctoral graduate who will also communicate changes of his or her postal or electronic address.

## 2.7. Mediation Procedures

In the event of a conflict between the student and the thesis director or the head of the laboratory, a mediator shall be appointed by the director of the doctoral school if it operates in one sole discipline, or by the head of the doctoral program if it covers several disciplines. The Doctoral school Board may be called upon to rule in the following cases:

- if the conflict continues after mediation;
- if the mediator deems it necessary;
- in a conflict between the doctoral student and the head of the doctoral program concerned, or the director of the doctoral school.

If the doctoral school board considers that, due to its position, it cannot guarantee the required neutrality, it shall submit the case to the board of the doctoral college, which refers it to an *ad hoc* committee. Should such mediation fail, the doctoral student or one of the other signatories of this charter can request a ruling from the head of the institution where the thesis work is carried out.

## 3. Respective Commitments of the Parties Involved in the Doctoral Thesis

In view of the principles set forth in this Charter, the parties hereto subscribe to the following undertakings:

### 3.1. The Thesis Director

The thesis director undertakes to inform the doctoral student of the number of theses currently under his or her direction. As mentioned above, the thesis director provides the student he or she is in charge of with personal and appropriate guidance, committing to regularly scheduled meetings. The director may intervene to correct the student's work in order to channel it in a more scientifically favorable direction. Should the student be authorized to embark on thesis work without funding, the thesis director must support the student in seeking financial backing. The director must inform the student of the resources available for his or her thesis work. He or she must support the student in the dissemination of his or her research work (publications, participation in conferences, and so forth).

### **3.2. The Doctoral Student**

The doctoral student shall comply with all rules and regulations, particularly referring to ethics, as well as charters and health and security regulations applicable to the host laboratory. He or she must submit progress reports to the thesis director as often as necessary. The doctoral student has an obligation to inform the thesis director of the progress made on his or her thesis and any difficulties encountered. All doctoral students must demonstrate initiative in their research work.

The doctoral student undertakes to make presentations of the thesis work in seminars at the hosting research laboratory or doctoral school, or outside the institution, and particularly at venues within the PSL scope. He or she must participate actively in the life and activities of the host research laboratory. The doctoral student must also comply with the organization of the Doctoral school, particularly concerning proposed training sessions and, if applicable, the organization of the doctoral program in which he or she is registered.

### **3.3. The Director of the Hosting Research Laboratory**

The director of the hosting research laboratory guarantees the material means and access to resources made available to the student. The lab director undertakes to integrate the student into the host laboratory from the beginning, by ensuring the appropriate facilities to accomplish the research work, in so far as the laboratory has the means necessary. The director also undertakes to inform the student of the life and activities of the laboratory.

### **3.4. The Head of the Doctoral Program**

In a pluri-disciplinary doctoral school, the head of the doctoral training program or specialty is the guarantor of the quality and relevance of the doctoral training proposed to the student. He or she undertakes to inform the doctoral student of the content and methods of the training. The head of the doctoral program shall be a primary interlocutor for the doctoral student for the entire duration of the doctoral training.

### **3.5. The Director of the Doctoral School**

The director of the doctoral school shall oversee compliance with the Charter, recruiting conditions and follow-up of the doctoral student. He or she shall implement a doctoral training plan and ensure professional and career monitoring for the doctoral students graduating from the school. The internal regulations of the doctoral school may complete this charter and set forth conditions for the supervision, funding, and monitoring of the thesis as well as pre-requisites concerning the defense of the thesis.

## ***Agreement***

The undersigned hereby declare having full knowledge of the provisions contained in the Thesis Charter applicable within the Paris Science et Letters Research University (PSL), pursuant to the Decree dated 25 May 2016 specifying the national framework for training and the conditions for the awarding of a doctoral degree, approved by the PSL Board of Directors on December 8, 2016 acting on the proposal of the Academic Council on November 17, 2016, and of the PSL Doctoral College on November 3, 2016.

They hereby undertake to comply with the provisions herein.

Done in Paris, on

**Doctoral Student**

**Doctoral School:**

Name, surname, signature :

**Thesis Director**

Name, surname, signature