

DOCTORAL CHARTER

Name:

Doctoral programme and specialization if applicable:

Thesis supervisor:

Research center:

Date :

In compliance with applicable laws and regulations¹, theses at Sciences Po are pursued within the Doctoral School framework.

The present charter aims to specify the organizational rules and ethical principles related to doctoral studies and relations between members of the academic community within the Doctoral School's PhD programmes, especially with regard to PhD students and their thesis supervisors. It takes into account, within the common framework of the Doctoral School the specificities of each discipline and individual situations, and is based on current best practices to ensure scientific quality.

In case of a joint thesis, Sciences Po commits to ensure that the principles established in this charter are respected by the cotutelle agreement partners.

1. THE PHD, AN ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL PROJECT

The doctoral programmes of Sciences Po's Doctoral School are ruled by high academic and ethical standards.

Admissions

Candidates are selected on the basis of their academic excellence, project relevance, aptitude for research, motivations, and their choice's consistency with the career they are considering.

¹ Amended decree of 25 May 2016 setting the national framework for training and the conditions for awarding a nationally recognized doctoral degree.

Goal

The thesis is an intellectual and personal project that requires strong and sustained commitment throughout its development. Its feasibility must be demonstrated upon approval of the thesis topic, and the project must seek to make a significant and original contribution in a research field, to provide the PhD student excellent training for research oriented careers and to contribute to personal accomplishment in the production of cutting-edge knowledge.

The awarding of a doctoral degree recognizes the academic excellence of the conducted research and the strength of the research skills acquired by the PhD student.

Commitments

The Doctoral School, research centers and thesis supervisors commit to assist PhD students individually and collectively in their efforts.

The Doctoral School commits to assisting PhD students with their professional insertion by providing them with professional training and the most complete information possible on academic and non-academic careers in the given fields.

PhD students commit to signing this charter and completing and signing the Individual training agreement form. Furthermore, PhD students commit to informing the Doctoral School about their professional situation throughout their doctoral studies and for a period of five years after obtaining their PhD in order for the Doctoral School to give PhD students a clear idea of professional opportunities.

The thesis supervisor and Doctoral School help PhD students to obtain fundings. They inform PhD students of available resources to prepare their thesis (including doctoral contracts, scholarships, regional corporate and associative grants as well as research and travel fundings).

PhD students must comply with Sciences Po's rules and meet academic requirements. They commit to a working schedule and pace and make gradual progress, except in the case of unforeseeable difficulties linked to emergencies or the thesis topic. They commit to immediately informing their thesis supervisor and/or the director of doctoral studies in their discipline of difficulties that might hinder their progression within their doctoral programme.

A mission statement is required prior to each trip a PhD student makes in the framework of his or her thesis (for any duration and any destination). Should the PhD student travel for his or her research to high-risk areas, the procedure presented in the appendix to the Charter must be respected.

2. THESIS PROGRESSION

The PhD registration specifies the project, title and thesis supervisor.

The registration also specifies the name of the research center that agreed to host and integrate the PhD student into its academic community and associate him/her to its activities.

As far as possible, the PhD student is provided a workspace and access to the research center's documentation, attends conferences and seminars, and is regularly invited to participate in and present his/her research at academic meetings (seminars, "PhD conferences", etc.).

The research center thus plays an essential role in the academic training and socialization of PhD students as young research professionals. From this perspective it is preferable that a strong link preexist or be established between the host unit and the thesis supervisor.

The PhD student respects the rules of the research center and of the Doctoral School community life. PhD students' activity within the center is fully oriented towards the progression of their thesis. Tasks related to teaching, assisting and academic activities are entrusted to them within legal limits, and these activities must always directly or indirectly contribute to the progression of the thesis. In compliance with applicable rules and regulations, the Doctoral School indicates the maximum number of teaching, assisting, etc. hours that can be requested in each doctoral programme.

PhD students are full members of Sciences Po's academic community. As such, they maintain collaborative academic relations with teachers and researchers. They are personally mentored by a thesis supervisor, and possibly secondary supervisor, who may suggest complementary work and reading.

Thesis supervisors must devote the necessary time to provide effective thesis mentoring. They organize regular and frequent meetings to efficiently guide the PhD student's work and provide opportunities for the student to discuss new possible directions in light of the results obtained thus far. To this end, a thesis supervisor cannot mentor more than 7 PhD students at the same time. The Doctoral School informs the students enrolled in these doctoral programmes of the number of theses currently supervised by the prospective supervisor.

Regular monitoring of PhD students' work implies that the students are regularly asked to provide updates on the status of their research, speak at seminars and present outlines, chapters and thesis chapters. These presentations are opportunities for corrections, suggestions, advice and encouragement from the thesis supervisor and broader academic community.

PhD students must submit an annual report on their ongoing research to their thesis supervisors and the director of doctoral studies of their given discipline. The type of the requested report is determined by the director of doctoral studies for each discipline (activity report, thesis chapter, research paper). PhD students must also maintain regular contact with their thesis supervisors.

After the second thesis year PhD students must give concrete and meaningful signs of their ability to complete the research within the deadlines set by the Doctoral School (see section 3). The assessment of the PhD student's progress will notably take into account the difficulty of the thesis subject, the problems encountered during data collection and the constraints linked to methodological choices. The PhD student and thesis supervisor commit to immediately informing the director of doctoral studies for the given discipline (or the director of the Doctoral School if the thesis supervisor is the director of doctoral studies), or one of the two mediators appointed by the director of the School if applicable, of any difficulty that might arise during the thesis monitoring.

An individual monitoring committee is established for PhD students within their research center, in accordance with the terms set by the Board of the Doctoral School. The committee ensures the prevention of any form of conflict, discrimination, and harassment.

3. THESIS DURATION

The reference duration for a thesis is three years. Annual reenrollment decisions are made by the head of the institution upon agreement of the director of the Doctoral School, following a recommendation from the thesis committee in light of the student's activity report and of the evaluation provided by the thesis supervisor, and if applicable in light of the individual monitoring committee.

The head of the institution can extend the length of doctoral training for a disabled student on the basis of a written request from the PhD student.

If the PhD student took maternity, paternity, or adoption leave, parental leave, or a sick leave longer than four consecutive months, or a leave of at least two months after a work-related accident, the thesis preparation time is extended upon request of the PhD student.

Exceptionally, the PhD student may submit a one-time-only reasoned request for an uninterrupted break of up to one year, subject to approval by the head of the institution and endorsement by the thesis supervisor and head of the Doctoral School. During this period, the PhD student temporarily suspends training and research work, but may remain enrolled at the institution if desired. This period does not count in the thesis duration.

If the PhD student encounters particular and unpredictable difficulties linked to the thesis topic (for example, difficulty accessing a field or archives), the head of the institution can grant a renewable one-year extension at the request of the head of the Doctoral School, based on a recommendation from the director of doctoral studies and the thesis supervisor. It is the PhD student's responsibility to make a reasoned request for an extension.

The prolongation of the thesis beyond three years does not mean that the PhD student will automatically continue to receive any previously secured funding; however, the Doctoral School will help the PhD student explore all funding options.

After informing the PhD student, the thesis supervisor submits a proposal to the head of the institution on the composition of the defense jury and the defense date, in accordance with the law and the institution's rules. A private defense can precede the public defense.

4. RE-ENROLMENT AND DEREGISTRATION

The pursuit of studies and of the thesis requires an annual renewal of administrative registration. Failure to reenroll and pay the corresponding fees within the deadlines results in the PhD student's *administrative deregistration*. The PhD student is informed of the deregistration.

If the PhD student consistently fails to meet commitments, a *pedagogical deregistration* process may be initiated. The director of doctoral studies in the given discipline (or, if this happens to also be the thesis supervisor, the director of the affiliated center, or any other professor – or equivalent in the discipline – designated by the director of the Doctoral School) will separately receive oral or written communications from the PhD student and thesis supervisor to determine why the thesis no longer seems to be on track.

If the director of doctoral studies deems deregistration to be appropriate, s/he informs the thesis committee of the decision. S/he also informs the PhD student that the latter has three weeks to send written remarks to the thesis committee and is entitled to request advice from the thesis supervisor, director of doctoral studies and PhD student representatives on the Board of the Doctoral School. If the thesis committee validates the deregistration proposal, it is transmitted to the director of the Doctoral school, and the head of the institution, in the event of deregistration, expressly notifies the PhD student.

5. ETHICS

¹ Ministerial Order of 26 August 2022 amending the Order of 25 May 2016,

Within the framework of the laws and regulations in force, the Charter ensures that academic freedom, the fundamental values of academic integrity and the ethical principles governing academic practice are respected.

Sciences Po requires PhD students to conduct their research in accordance with the fundamental values of academic integrity and the principles of research ethics, and to engage in ethical professional practice throughout the duration of their doctoral studies.

PhD students have access to training in the principles and fundamental values of research ethics and academic integrity, may consult the [Sciences Po Framework for Research Ethics](#), the [guides](#) and [tools](#) developed by the Academic Integrity Panel and the Sciences Po Research Ethics Committee, as well as Sciences Po's dedicated [Academic Integrity Officer](#).

At Sciences Po, the Director of the School of Research, the Academic Integrity Officer, thesis supervisors, research unit directors and all those supervising or participating in the work of a PhD student encourage and support this commitment.

Any PhD student committing fraud, that is plagiarism and/or the use of results or data obtained by others or together with others without authorization and/or attribution, or the fabrication or falsification of data and/or results, will face academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Members of the research center, the academic community and the thesis supervisor must scrupulously respect authorship of the work, research and discoveries made by the PhD student.

Any moral or ethical issue will expeditiously be brought to the attention of the director of the School of Research for mediation and the Academic Integrity Officer who investigates allegations of failure to meet academic integrity standard.

In application of the article L612-7 of the French Education Code and in accordance with the Order of 26 August 2022 (article 16) concerning doctoral training, “the doctor takes the doctoral oath of academic integrity at the end of their viva by pronouncing the following words:

‘In the presence of my peers.

With the completion of my doctorate in [research field], in my quest for knowledge, I have carried out demanding academic research, demonstrated intellectual rigor, ethical reflection and respect for the principles of research integrity. As I pursue my professional career, whatever my chosen field, I pledge, to the greatest of my ability, to continue to maintain integrity in my relationship to knowledge, in my methods and in my results.”

The School of Research is committed, within the framework of Sciences Po's general policy and the legislation in force, to fighting discrimination against people on the basis of religion, politics, sexual orientation, origin, gender, disability, age, etc. The School of Research is also committed to combating bullying and harassment.

The PhD student

The director of doctoral studies

The thesis supervisor

The director of the research centre

The director of the School of Research

