
Doctoral College Aix-Marseille Université

Principles of doctoral training

DOCTORAL CHARTER

Validated by the Research Commission on 11/01/2018
Validated by the Academic Board on 23/01/2018

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Preamble

The university doctoral thesis is regulated by the French Ministerial Order of 25 May 2016, *which sets the national framework of doctoral training and the modalities leading to the delivery of the national doctoral degree*. It is prepared in a Doctoral School within a research unit or team accredited as a hosting unit or team, under the scientific responsibility of a thesis supervisor qualified to supervise research (Habilitation à Diriger des Recherches : HDR), possibly assisted by a co-supervisor who may not yet be HDR, and who shares 50% of this responsibility. However, if the thesis co-supervision is assumed by someone outside academia the number of co-supervisors may be extended to two.

In accordance with Article 12 of the Ministerial Order of 25 May 2016, the respective rights and duties of the doctoral candidate and their thesis supervisor(s), and their reciprocal commitments, are defined by a *Doctoral Charter* co-signed by both parties, at the beginning of the first academic year of thesis enrolment. The Charter is also approved by the director of the doctoral school, the director of the hosting research unit and the thesis supervisor(s). The director of the doctoral school guarantees its application.

The preparation of the thesis must be part of a scientific, professional and personal project clearly defined in its objectives and requirements. The framework set by the Doctoral Charter guarantees high quality doctoral training as well as a dynamic preparation as regards the future professional insertion of the candidate. Accepting the conditions of the Charter entails that the preparation of the thesis is based on a freely consented agreement between the doctoral candidate and their thesis supervisor(s) concerning the choice of the subject and the working conditions necessary for the progress of the work.

The present Doctoral Charter defines the principles collectively agreed upon by the directors of the doctoral schools of Aix-Marseille Université (AMU), specifying the conditions under which the doctoral training is carried out within AMU's doctoral college. It sets the conditions of thesis monitoring and supervision and specifies the prescribed deadlines, the necessary coordination between the doctoral candidate, their thesis supervisor(s), the director of the research unit and the director of the doctoral school, as well as the targeted objectives and the means that have to be implemented in terms of training and preparation for the professional insertion of the future doctoral degree holder.

The provisions of this Charter do not exclude the adoption of more specific and stricter provisions by a doctoral school, depending on its own rules of procedure. Any research unit, research team or doctoral school will nevertheless ensure that their specific rules will be as compatible as possible with the present Charter.

TITLE I – Enrolment in a doctoral thesis

Article 1 – The doctoral candidate enrolled in one of the doctoral schools of AMU’s doctoral college will, upon successful evaluation and defence of their doctoral thesis, be awarded the degree and title of “*Doctor of Aix-Marseille Université*” delivered by AMU in their discipline/specialty of registration.

Article 2 – The conditions of enrolment for a doctoral thesis in terms of degree are defined by the Ministerial Order of 25 May 2016. In addition to these conditions, prerequisites may be set by each of the doctoral schools in their rules of procedure. Upon first registration, the doctoral thesis project which the doctoral candidate and their supervisor(s) have agreed upon is submitted to the director of the doctoral school who validates the registration and allows the integration of the candidate into a research unit affiliated to the doctoral school (after obtaining the agreement of the director of the research unit) to carry out a specific research project under the scientific responsibility of a thesis supervisor/co-supervisor.

Article 3 – In order to develop the international dimension of doctoral training, to promote scientific cooperation between AMU's research units or teams and their international partners and to encourage mobility among doctoral candidates, an international cotutelle may be set up between AMU and one or more international higher education institutions. The conditions of this cotutelle are defined by a cotutelle agreement, the terms and modalities of which are set out in articles 21, 22 and 23 of the Ministerial Order of 25 May 2016. AMU and its contracting partners are mutually bound by the principle of reciprocity.

If setting up an international cotutelle proves difficult, it remains possible to support the mobility of doctoral candidates thanks to national or international thesis co-supervision within the framework of scientific cooperation between AMU's research units or teams and their partners, nationally or internationally. In such a case, a thesis co-supervision agreement must be signed between AMU and the partner institution; the doctoral candidate will be registered at AMU and will be awarded their doctoral degree, after defence of the thesis, at AMU.

Article 4 – Decree n° 2002-590 of 24 April 2002 dealing with the validation of acquired experience (VAE) in higher education institutions applies to diplomas awarded by universities, including doctorates.

According to article 2 of this decree, the acquired experience corresponding to the exercise, either continuous or not and for a cumulative period of at least three years, of salaried, non-salaried or voluntary activities may generate validation. The candidate must provide evidence of having acquired all or part of the knowledge and skills required to obtain the diploma they apply for.

Article 5 – The legal duration of the thesis, as defined by the Ministerial Order of 25 May 2016, generally corresponds to 3 years of full-time research work. In other cases, the candidate may be allowed a maximum period of 6 years. Doctoral registration must be renewed at the beginning of each academic year by the President of the university on the proposal of the director of the doctoral school after consultation with the thesis supervisor, and, from the 3rd registration onwards, on the basis of the report established by the individual thesis follow-up committee assessing the work of the doctoral candidate (see Article 11 of this Charter). If the doctoral candidate does not take the necessary measures to register each year prior to the deadline set by the university, they will be considered as having abandoned their doctorate and will then be removed from the list of doctoral candidates in the doctoral school in which they first registered. If registration is rejected, the doctoral candidate receives an official letter from the director of the doctoral school with a reasoned opinion. The doctoral candidate may then request a second opinion from AMU’s Research Commission within one month upon receiving the first notification. In all cases, the decision to deny registration is made by the President of the institution, who notifies the doctoral candidate.

In case of a drop-out during an academic year, the doctoral candidate will not be allowed to re-enrol in a doctorate in the same discipline.

Article 6 – From the fourth year on, in order to re-enrol, the doctoral candidate must request a derogation which can be exceptionally granted by the President of the university after consultation with the thesis supervisor(s), the director of the doctoral school and after examining the report of the individual thesis follow-up committee. Requests for any exceptional derogation for a 5th or 6th year must additionally be accompanied by a detailed and reasoned opinion of the doctoral school council and validated by the President of the University. In the beginning of every year, the list of potential beneficiaries is presented to the doctoral school council and then transmitted to AMU's Research Commission.

Doctoral candidates with disabilities can be granted derogations by the President of the institution upon motivated requests. In the case of maternity, paternity, childcare or adoption leave, parental leave, sick leave of more than 4 consecutive months, or any 2 month-leave following an accident at work, the duration of the preparation of the doctorate will be extended if the person concerned so requests.

Exceptionally and following a motivated request from the doctoral candidate, an indivisible break period (maximum one year) may take place once. It is granted by the President of the institution where the doctoral candidate is enrolled, with the agreement of the employer when any, and upon the opinions of the thesis supervisor(s) and of the director of the doctoral school. The doctoral training and research work are provisionally suspended, but the doctoral candidate may, if they so wish, remain enrolled in the institution. The break period is not included in the duration of the thesis. The candidate's re-enrolment at the end of the break period is guaranteed.

Article 7 – The doctoral candidate's scientific, material and financial resources during the thesis preparation period must be notified by the candidate and their thesis supervisor to the director of the doctoral school, under the control of the research unit director. It is recommended to proceed to a thesis registration only after having clarified the conditions of resources for the duration of the thesis with the candidate and the thesis supervisor.

Article 8 – Even before registering for a thesis, the candidate must be formally informed of the professional opportunities which they can reasonably expect at the end of their doctoral training. Their doctoral school will provide answers concerning the future of AMU doctoral graduates and present statistical data on their integration, both at the academic level (universities, public research institutions) and outside the academia (service sector, research in the industrial and economic sector, local authorities, etc.).

TITLE II – Supervision and thesis development

Article 9 – According to article 10 of the Ministerial Order of 25 May 2016, the doctoral thesis is prepared in a doctoral school, under the control and responsibility of a thesis supervisor belonging to a doctoral school or within the framework of a co-supervision as mentioned in article 16 of the same Order.

A researcher or faculty member, whether or not they are qualified as HDR, can only be affiliated to one and only one doctoral school to which their assigned research unit or team belongs. If the research unit or team is affiliated to more than one doctoral school, the researcher or faculty member must choose the school that best fits their research activities. Any request to derogate from this rule must be motivated and examined by the doctoral college in order to be submitted to the Research Commission for approval.

A thesis supervisor can be a HDR qualified researcher or faculty. The latter can only supervise a thesis within the doctoral school to which they are affiliated. If necessary, they may co-supervise a thesis within another doctoral school, particularly in the context of interdisciplinary thesis projects.

A researcher or faculty member who does not hold a HDR qualification may not act as a thesis supervisor. They may, however, participate in the co-supervision of a thesis on an ad hoc basis, or request a specific authorization for the supervision of a single thesis. In the latter case, their request will be submitted to the Research Commission for approval.

An emeritus professor may continue to supervise or co-supervise theses that started before the date of retirement but cannot engage in the supervision of new doctoral candidates. Emeriti may participate in individual doctoral candidate follow-up committees and defence committees.

Article 10 – The thesis supervisor is responsible for supervising the doctoral candidate over the duration of the thesis. They must commit to devoting a significant part of their time in order to guide the doctoral candidate under their supervision to ensure an innovative approach in an up-to-date scientific context.

Except in case of derogations granted by the council of the doctoral school, a thesis supervisor shall not supervise simultaneously more than:

- 3 doctoral candidates full-time in the disciplines of exact sciences (300%);
- 6 doctoral candidates full-time in the disciplines of human and social sciences (600%).

In case of co-supervision, the co-supervision is equally divided: 50% for the thesis supervisor and 50% for the co-supervisor.

For a thesis co-supervisor who does not hold a HDR qualification, the maximum number of simultaneous co-supervisions may not exceed two.

Article 11 – During the first year of the thesis, an individual follow-up committee is established for each doctoral candidate. Its role is to ensure the regular progress of the thesis in the respect of the present Charter and the individual training agreement (see Article 14). Furthermore, it is up to the committee to evaluate, during an interview with the doctoral candidate, the conditions of their training and the progress of their research. The doctoral candidate's individual follow-up committee makes recommendations and sends a report to the director of the doctoral school, the doctoral candidate and the thesis supervisor. If needed, it may act as a mediator during the course of the thesis. The modalities of composition, organization and operation of this committee are set by the doctoral school council. Its members do not take part in the supervision of the doctoral candidate's work.

Article 12 – The doctoral candidate undertakes to comply with all the rules of attendance, safety and discipline applicable within the research unit. They undertake to respect a working time and rhythm dedicated to the completion of their thesis within the allotted deadlines. They must participate in all the activities of their research unit and present their work in its seminars. They also undertake to provide their thesis supervisor(s) with as many progress reports as necessary. The thesis supervisor(s), for their part, undertakes to provide the doctoral candidate with feedback on the submitted reports. The doctoral candidate must inform their supervisor(s) of any difficulties encountered in the progress of their work that would be inherent to an innovative research approach.

Article 13 – According to article 14 of the Ministerial Order of 25 May 2016 and article 6 of the present Charter, the doctoral candidate may exceptionally and upon motivated request benefit from an indivisible break of a maximum duration of one year, only once during the doctoral period.

The break can be made at the beginning of the 2nd year of the doctorate but not at the end of the 3rd year when the preparation of the doctorate is full-time. When the doctoral candidate works on their thesis only part-time, the break may also be requested during the 4th year.

Article 14 – The doctoral candidate undertakes, in addition to their research activity in the context of their thesis, to validate the Individual Training Agreement (*Convention Individuelle de Formation*: CIF) set up by the doctoral training directorate, before defending their thesis. The CIF requires a minimum of 100 hours of training during the thesis period, divided into 50 hours of scientific, disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary training and 50 hours of professional training to support career development. This training is intended to support doctoral candidates in the preparation of their professional project and are opportunities to acquire new scientific knowledge and to develop skills that will be useful in future professional situations. Employed doctoral candidates, in CIFRE (Conventions Industrielles de Formation par la Recherche) or VAE (see article 4), may request to be exempted from this obligation by the director of their doctoral school.

A training agreement, mentioning the elements set by article 12 of the Ministerial Order of 25 May 2016, is signed by the thesis supervisor and the doctoral candidate. This agreement may be modified as necessary, at the beginning of a new academic year, and must then be signed by both parties. AMU guarantees its implementation. A doctoral candidate's portfolio, comprising a list of all the training activities of the doctoral candidate during their training, including teaching, dissemination of scientific culture or technology transfer, and highlighting the skills they have developed during their doctoral period, shall be produced. It must be regularly updated by the doctoral candidate.

Article 15 – During the course of the thesis, the doctoral candidates and their thesis supervisor shall ensure that the conditions for thesis defence set by each of the doctoral schools of the AMU doctoral college, in particular as far as the requirements on publications and training hours are concerned, will be met at the end of the doctoral training.

Article 16 – Rights of the doctoral candidate: Publications, patents or industrial reports related to the research carried out by the doctoral candidate, be it the thesis itself or articles produced during or after the preparation of the manuscript, must include the doctoral candidate among the co-authors and possible beneficiaries.

TITLE III – Thesis defence

Article 17 – The conditions necessary for the defence of the thesis defined by the doctoral school to which the candidate is affiliated, in accordance with the provisions of the Ministerial Order of 25 May 2016, must be communicated to the doctoral candidate and their supervisor(s) upon enrolment in the thesis. They constitute a compulsory prerequisite before engaging the defence procedure.

The composition of the defence committee must comply with Article 18 of the Ministerial Order of 25 May 2016. It must be composed of 4 to 8 members. Its composition should allow a balanced representation of women and men, and at least half of its members must be from outside the doctoral school and AMU; the defence committee should also be composed of personalities with the rank of professor, research director or equivalent faculty as set in Article 6 of the Ministerial Order of 25 May 2016. If the thesis supervisor and co-supervisor are both members of the committee, it is recommended to ensure that the committee is composed of at least 5 members.

In the case of cotutelles, the composition of the committee as well as the place of the defence must comply with the articles in the cotutelle agreement.

Article 18 – Publications resulting from the doctoral candidates' thesis will have to comply with AMU's publication Charter. Notably, they must bear the signature of Aix-Marseille Université and if necessary, those of the other institutions of the concerned research units.

Article 19 – The thesis defence request is submitted by the doctoral candidate on the proposal of their thesis supervisor. The thesis supervisor's signature on the application form for authorisation to defend the thesis is deemed validation of the scientific quality of the thesis work and of the manuscript sent to the reviewers. The director of the doctoral school is responsible for ensuring that the requirements for thesis defence and the composition of the defence committee both obey the conditions included in the doctoral school's rules of procedure and the Ministerial Order of 25 May 2016. Authorisation for the defence is granted by the President of the University in which the candidate is enrolled, in view of the pre-reports prepared by reviewers who are not involved in the work of the doctoral candidate, and after the validation of the director of the doctoral school.

The defence is public, except in the case of an exemption granted by the President of the institution if the thesis work is of a proven confidential nature and that the results are subject to a procedure to allow for the preservation of intellectual or even industrial property. Admission or adjournment is pronounced after deliberation by the committee. The defence report, drawn up by the President of the committee, must be sent to the candidate within one month after the defence.

The research activity in the framework of the doctorate is carried out in accordance with the scientific and academic methods of the disciplines concerned, in the respect of secularism and the rights of others, notably with regard to intellectual property rights: respect for image rights, copyright, patent law and the protection of drawings and models. The University does not intend to give any endorsement or rejection to the opinions expressed, which are to be considered as their author's own.

The doctoral candidate and their thesis supervisor(s) commit themselves to respecting the French national Charter for research integrity. The doctoral candidate must also respect AMU's Charter relative to plagiarism.

TITLE IV – The professional future of doctoral graduates

Article 20 – AMU's doctoral degree holders formally commit themselves to communicating the information relative to their professional situations for at least 5 years. During this period, they will respond to any request from the doctoral college or the doctoral school regarding the review of their postdoctoral situation.

On behalf of the doctoral college, every year the Student Life Observatory monitors every year the career development of AMU's doctoral graduates at 1 year, 3 years and 5 years following the defence of their theses. The results of these surveys will be made available to doctoral candidates on the websites of the doctoral college and of the doctoral schools in order to help them prepare for the continuation of their careers. They will allow, as indicated in Article 8 of the Doctoral Charter, any candidate, even before enrolling in a thesis, to be formally informed of the professional opportunities which they can reasonably expect at the end of their doctoral training.

Article 21 – The thesis supervisor(s) and the director of the research unit can undertake, on request, to support the doctoral graduate in any qualification, research, postdoctoral training and recruitment procedures whenever they consider it appropriate.

Article 22 – Any information related to the thesis work and, more generally, to the activity of the research unit may be confidential. The doctoral graduate commits not to disclose any information related to the research projects of the research unit and its scientific environment for at least a period of 5 years, and shall keep the results and other knowledge acquired during the thesis strictly confidential, for the protection of intellectual property.

TITLE V – Electronic registration and dissemination of theses

Article 23 – In compliance with the provisions of Article 24 of the above-mentioned Ministerial Order of 25 May 2016, registering the thesis is mandatory. Only electronic registration is acknowledged as official registration. Registration must be completed one month prior to the thesis defence. Besides, in compliance with Article 24, the doctoral candidate shall provide paper copies to the members of the committee who request them.

Article 24 – The author undertakes to respect the rights of third parties, in particular intellectual property rights. In the event when the thesis includes elements protected by any right whatsoever, the author must request the necessary authorisations for their use, reproduction and representation from the holder(s) of these rights. This commitment is materialized by the signature of the "Contract for the online publication of a defended thesis" completed for this purpose. The author is responsible for the content of their thesis. Thus they protect AMU against any appeal. In no case can AMU be held responsible for the infringing on the rights of a third party.

Article 25 – The PDF version of the thesis must be filed by the author on the electronic thesis registration portal of AMU. The author is exclusively responsible for the legibility of the registered documents, which may be controlled by the University. In case modifications are requested by the committee, and mentioned on the report at the end of the defence, the author, within 3 months, shall submit a second document according to the same procedures. The electronic thesis deposit portal requires the control of the modifications by the thesis supervisor.

Article 26 – In compliance with the provisions of the above-mentioned Ministerial Order of 25 May 2016, the theses defended at AMU are published on the intranet, except when they contain proven confidential material. Internet online publication of the defended thesis is subject to the author's authorisation and, provided there is no clause of confidentiality, agreed under the conditions defined in Article 25 of this Charter. The author may refuse this online publication, authorise it without reservation or postpone it, notably in order to preserve the valorisation of the research results. The online publication of the thesis gives rise to the conclusion of a written contract between the University and the author. The "Contract for the online publication of a defended thesis" defines the conditions under which the University is authorised to make the thesis available to the public concerned.

Article 27 – Depending on the authorisation provided by the author in the "Contract for the online publication of a defended thesis", the University publishes defended theses in electronic form and, for that purpose, puts them online on the internet (1) or on the intranet (2) exclusively.

- (1) Internet: the global electronic network publicly accessible without prior identification.
- (2) Intranet: the computer network accessible, free of charge, from individual computers made available to faculty, researchers, students and staff on the premises of an institution belonging to AMU and remotely after secure authentication.

The theses will thus be made available to the public defined above, who will be able to consult them free of charge, reproduce them on any medium and reproduce them free of charge for exclusively personal and educational purposes and in compliance with the provisions of the intellectual property code in force.

If the thesis is a collaborative work, the authorisation of all co-authors is required. The authorisation may be granted at any time by the author who may choose the date of publication of the thesis on the

internet. If the author wishes to put their thesis online, even though this was not their intention beforehand, it is their responsibility to contact the University in order to implement the procedure.

Article 28 – The author may withdraw the permission for publication on the internet at any time without justification. The thesis will then be available only on the intranet. In that case, they must notify the University of their decision in a registered letter with acknowledgement of receipt, according to the procedure indicated by the doctoral registration office. The University undertakes to change the internet publication to the benefit of the exclusive intranet publication at the latest within a period of 6 months from the reception date of the registered letter.

Article 29 – The University is not bound by the author's consent to put the thesis online; the dissemination of the thesis, even restricted to the intranet, remains subject to the committee's agreement. The University may refuse to put the thesis online or withdraw it at any time in case of infringement of any right of a third party. The confidential thesis will neither be reproduced nor communicated for the duration of the confidentiality.

TITLE VI – Mediation procedures

Article 30 – In case of conflict, either of the signatory parties of this Doctoral Charter may call upon the thesis follow-up committee or upon a mediator appointed by the director of the doctoral school; the mediator's mission implies their impartiality. Should this procedure fail, the director of the doctoral school calls upon the director of the doctoral college who, after discussion with the parties concerned, sets up a conflict resolution procedure involving at least one person from outside the doctoral school. As a last resort, AMU's Ombudsman is called upon.

The doctoral candidate,

Last name, first name:

Date:

Signature

The thesis supervisor,

Last name, first name:

Date:

Signature

The co-supervisor, (if applicable)

Last name, first name:

Date:

Signature

The head of the research unit,

Last name, first name:

Date:

Signature

The director of the Doctoral School,

Last name, first name:

Date:

Signature