
Doctoral College Aix-Marseille Université

Principles of doctoral training

DOCTORAL CHARTER

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Preamble

The university doctoral thesis is regulated by the 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), assisted eventually 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 Ordre of 25 Mai 2016, the respective rights and duties of the doctoral candidate and his or her thesis supervisor(s), and their reciprocal commitments, are defined by a *Doctoral Charter* co-signed by both parties, at the beginning of enrolment in the thesis. The Charter is 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 is liable for its application.

The preparation of the thesis must be part of a project of scientific, professional and personal nature clearly defined in its objectives and requirements. The framework set by the Doctoral Charter intends to provide doctoral training with a guarantee of high scientific quality and with active preparation for the professional insertion of doctoral degree holders. 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 his or her 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, his or her 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 would-be doctoral degree holder.

The provisions of this Charter do not exclude the adoption, by each doctoral school, of specific and stricter provisions in its rules of procedure. It is specified that those institutions to which research units and teams are affiliated while being members of the doctoral schools of the doctoral college ensure that they seek provisions regarding the doctorate that are as compatible as possible with this 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 his or her doctoral thesis, be awarded the degree and title of “*Doctor of Aix-Marseille Université*” delivered by AMU in his or her 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, determined by the agreement between the doctoral candidate and his or her supervisor(s), is submitted to the director of the doctoral school, who validates the registration on the basis of the acceptance of the candidate in a research unit affiliated to the doctoral school (with 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 the AMU's research units or teams and their international partners and to foster the mobility of doctoral candidates, an international cotutelle for theses 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 the 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.

In case of difficulty in setting up an international cotutelle for a thesis, it may also be possible to foster the mobility of doctoral candidates through national or international thesis co-supervision within the framework of scientific cooperation between the AMU's research units or teams and their partners at the national or international level. In this eventuality, a thesis co-supervision agreement must be signed between AMU and the partner institution. In this case, the doctoral candidate will only be registered and will only be awarded the doctoral degree, after defence of the thesis, at AMU.

Article 4 – The decree n° 2002-590 of 24 April 2002 on the validation of acquired experience (VAE) in higher education institutions applies to diplomas awarded at universities, including the doctorate.

According to article 2 of this decree, the acquired experience corresponding to the exercise, either continuous or not, for a cumulative period of at least three years, of salaried, non-salaried or voluntary activities, may generate validation. This experience must provide evidence of all or part of the knowledge and skills required to obtain the diploma applied 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 duration needed to prepare the doctorate may cover a maximum period of 6 years. Doctoral registration must be renewed at the beginning of each academic year by the head of the institution on proposal of the director of the doctoral school following the opinion of the thesis supervisor, and, from the 3rd registration onwards, of the individual thesis follow-up committee 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, he or she will be deemed to have abandoned his or her doctorate and will then be removed from the list of candidates of the doctoral school to which he or she is affiliated. In the case of a refusal of registration, following the opinion of the thesis supervisor, the doctoral candidate receives a motivated opinion from the director of the doctoral school. The doctoral candidate may then request a second opinion from the research commission within one month after the first notification. In all cases, the decision to deny registration is made by the head of the institution, who notifies the doctoral candidate.

In case of a drop-out during the academic year, the doctoral candidate cannot re-enrol in a doctorate in the same discipline.

Article 6 – After completion of the 3rd year, the re-enrolment in doctoral thesis becomes derogatory. Exceptional enrolments in the 4th year of the thesis are granted, upon the motivated request of the doctoral candidate, by the President of the university, following a recommendation from the thesis supervisor after consulting the follow-up committee and the director of the doctoral school. Exceptional registrations from the 5th year of thesis must additionally be accompanied by a detailed opinion of the doctoral school council and validated by the President of the University. The list of beneficiaries is presented annually to the doctoral school council and transmitted to the research commission.

The duration of the doctoral training of a doctoral candidate with a disability may be extended by the head of the institution at the motivated request of the person concerned. If the doctoral candidate has been granted maternity, paternity, childcare or adoption leave, parental leave, sick leave of more than 4 consecutive months or leave of at least 2 months following an accident at work, the duration of the preparation of the doctorate is extended if the person concerned so requests.

Exceptionally and following a motivated request from the doctoral candidate, an indivisible break period of a maximum of one year may take place once. It is granted by a decision of the head of the institution where the doctoral candidate is enrolled, following agreement from the employer if necessary, and the opinion of the thesis supervisor and of the director of the doctoral school. The doctoral training and research work are provisionally suspended, but the doctoral candidate may, if he or she so wishes, remain enrolled in the institution. The break period is not included in the duration of the thesis. The institution guarantees the doctoral candidate enrolment in doctoral training at the end of the break period.

Article 7 – The doctoral candidate's scientific, material and financial resources requirements during the thesis preparation period must be notified by the candidate and his or her 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 with the candidate and the thesis supervisor the conditions of resources for the duration of the thesis.

Article 8 – Even before registering for a thesis, the candidate must be formally informed of the professional opportunities to which he or she can reasonably aspire at the end of his or her doctoral training. His or her doctoral school will be able to answer questions concerning the future of AMU doctoral graduates and to 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 affiliated to a doctoral school or in the framework of a co-supervision as mentioned in article 16 of the same Order.

A researcher or faculty, whether or not he or she is qualified as HDR, can only be affiliated to one and only one doctoral school, that of his or her assigned research unit or team. If the latter is affiliated to more than one doctoral school, he or she must choose the one that best fits his or her research activity. Any request for a derogation from this rule must be motivated and examined by the doctoral college in order to be submitted for approval to the research commission. The function of the thesis supervisor can be carried out by an HDR qualified researcher or faculty. The latter can only supervise a thesis within the doctoral school to which he or she is affiliated. If necessary, he or she may co-supervise a thesis at

another doctoral school, particularly in the context of interdisciplinary thesis projects. A researcher or faculty who does not hold an HDR qualification may not act as a thesis supervisor. He or she may, however, participate on an ad hoc basis in the co-supervision of a thesis or request a waiver for a single thesis supervision. In the latter case, this 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. He or she 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. He or she must commit to devoting a significant part of his or her time to guide the doctoral candidate under his or her supervision to ensure an innovative approach in an up-to-date scientific context. Except in case of exemptions granted by the council of the doctoral school, a thesis supervisor shall not supervise at the same time more than:

- 3 doctoral candidates full-time in the disciplines of exact sciences;
- 6 doctoral candidates full-time in the disciplines of human and social sciences.

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

For a thesis co-supervisor who does not hold an HDR qualification, the maximum number of simultaneous co-supervisions is at most equal to two.

Article 11 – During the first year of the thesis, an individual follow-up committee of the doctoral candidate is established. Its role is to ensure the smooth progress of the thesis based on the present Charter and the training agreement (see Article 14). Furthermore, it is up to the committee to evaluate, during an interview with the doctoral candidate, the conditions of his or her training and the progress of his or her 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 commits to respecting all the rules of attendance, safety and discipline applicable within the research unit. He or she commits to a working time and rhythm dedicated to the completion of the thesis within the allotted deadlines. He or she must participate in all the activities of the research unit and present his or her work in its seminars. He or she also undertakes to provide his or her thesis supervisor(s) with as many progress notes as he or she may require. The thesis supervisor(s), for his or her part, undertakes to provide the doctoral candidate with feedback on the submitted notes. The doctoral candidate must inform his or her supervisor(s) of any difficulties encountered in the progress of his or her work, 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, once only during the doctoral studies.

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. In case the preparation of the doctorate is done part-time, the break may also be made during the 4th year

Article 14 – The doctoral candidate undertakes, in addition to his or her research activity in the context of his or her thesis, to validate the Individual Training Contract (*Contrat Individuel de Formation* : CIF) set

up by the doctoral college, before defending his or her 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 develop skills that are transferable to future professional situations. Employed doctoral candidates, in CIFRE (Conventions Industrielles de Formation par la Recherche) or VAE (see article 4), may request exemptions from this obligation from the director of affiliated 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, during re-enrolment upon agreement signed between the parties. AMU is the guarantor of its implementation. A doctoral candidate's portfolio comprising an individualised list of all the activities of the doctoral candidate during his or her training, including teaching, dissemination of scientific culture or technology transfer, and highlighting the skills he or she has developed during the doctoral period, shall be produced. It is 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 in terms of the minimum required publications and training hours, 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 his or her 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 and, on the other hand, be composed of personalities of the rank of professor, research director or equivalent staff 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 theses subject to a cotutelle agreement, the composition of the committee as well as the place of the defence must comply with the articles of the aforementioned agreement.

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

Article 19 – The defence request is submitted by the doctoral candidate on the proposal of his or her 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 conditions regarding the defence specific to the doctoral school are met and that the composition of the committee is in accordance with 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 recommendation of the director of the doctoral school.

The defence is public, except in the case of an exemption granted by the head of the institution if the thesis work is of a proven confidential nature and 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 the intellectual property rights of third parties: 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 his or her thesis supervisor(s) commit themselves to respecting the French national Charter for research integrity. The doctoral candidate must respect also AMU's Charter relative to the fight against plagiarism.

TITLE IV – Doctoral graduates professional future

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

The Student Life Observatory monitors, on behalf of the doctoral college, every year the career development of AMU's doctoral graduates at 1 year, 3 years and 5 years after the defence of their thesis. The results of these surveys will be made available to doctoral candidates on the websites of the doctoral college and the doctoral schools 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 to which he or she can reasonably aspire at the end of his or her 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 the qualification, research, postdoctoral training and recruitment procedures as soon as 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 of a confidential nature. 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 of any nature whatsoever 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 have requested them.

Article 24 – The author undertakes to respect the rights of third parties, in particular intellectual property rights. In the event where the thesis would include 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 his or her thesis. He or she protects 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 deposited 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 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 University implements in the electronic thesis deposit portal the control by the thesis supervisor of the modifications made.

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 proceeds for that purpose, putting 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 concerned, who will be able to consult them free of charge, reproduce them on any medium and represent 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 his or her thesis online, even though this was not his or her intention beforehand, it is his or her responsibility to contact the University 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, he or she must notify the University of the decision by 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, whose dissemination, 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 to this Doctoral Charter may call upon the thesis follow-up committee or a mediator appointed by the director of the doctoral school, the mediator's mission implying his or her impartiality. Should this 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, the AMU 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