

# Ecole Doctorale

## Doctoral School Charter

*The terms doctoral student, thesis supervisor, doctoral school director and laboratory manager used here are generic and refer, respectively, to the doctoral student, the person(s) supervising or co-supervising the thesis, the person managing the doctoral school and the person managing the laboratory.*

Doctoral training is governed by the **decree of 25 May 2016 setting the national framework for training and the procedures leading to the award of the doctoral degree**, which states in article 12 that *"under the responsibility of the accredited institutions, the doctoral school sets the conditions for monitoring and supervision through a charter, the terms of which it defines."*

### 1. Purposes

This charter was drawn up by the Ecole Doctorale of La Rochelle Université and adopted by its board on 29/11/2022. It is intended to apply to all doctoral students enrolled at La Rochelle Université.

The preparation of a thesis is based on a free agreement between the doctoral student and the thesis supervisor. This agreement covers the precise definition of the subject and the working conditions required to carry out the research. Thesis supervisors and doctoral students therefore have respective rights and duties.

By signing this charter, the doctoral student, his/her thesis supervisor, the director of the Doctoral School and the director of the research unit agree to comply with its terms. In application of this charter, they must also sign a training contract, which specifies the reception and monitoring conditions specific to each thesis, as well as the rights and duties of the parties involved. The rules and regulations of the Doctoral School complete the framework.

This charter defines these mutual commitments. It requires everyone to respect the rules of professional ethics in accordance with the regulations in force and the practices already tried and tested, while respecting the diversity of disciplines. It aims to guarantee high scientific quality.

### 2. The thesis – a milestone in both personal and professional life

Preparing a thesis is part of a personal and professional project. The objectives pursued and the means used to carry out this project must be specified in collaboration with the thesis supervisor or co-supervisors.

With this in mind, the thesis supervisor, the director of the host laboratory and the doctoral school inform students of the career opportunities available to them at the end of their studies, taking into account the course taken and available local and national information on the future of doctoral students. Doctorate holders agree to keep the Doctoral School informed of their professional situation and address for at least five years after their thesis has been defended. The thesis supervisor, research teams and student associations are invited to act as relays for collecting this information.

Doctoral students must take an active part in the preparation of their professional integration, with the support of their research unit and Doctoral School. They should contact potential future employers (public and private companies, self-employed professionals, laboratories, universities in France and abroad). They must take any additional training courses offered by their Doctoral School or another school, in agreement with the Doctoral School management.

### 3. Financial resources for doctoral students

Doctoral students must have sufficient financial resources from the time they enrol to the time they defend their thesis, according to a level of resources specified in the academic regulations. The financial resources of doctoral students during the preparation of their thesis must be explicitly defined by the doctoral student, the thesis supervisor and the director of the host research unit and included in the training contract signed at the start of the doctoral programme.

When a doctoral student enrolls, the director or deputy director of the Doctoral School ensures that the scientific, material and financial conditions are met to guarantee that the doctoral student's research work and preparation for the thesis can be carried out properly.

The Doctoral School should inform candidates of the possible sources of funding for the preparation of their thesis (doctoral work contract, funding from local authorities, CIFRE agreements, grants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or associations, etc.), as well as their social rights depending on the type of funding (health care, unemployment benefits, pension rights, etc.).

In accepting funding received through the university, the doctoral student and his/her thesis supervisor undertake to carry out the research within the given deadline and to defend the thesis in the university.

#### **4. Subject and feasibility of the thesis**

The choice of the subject, which is based on an agreement between the doctoral student and his/her supervisor, is formalised at the time of enrolment. The supervisor then draws up a document defining the subject, to which the doctoral student may have contributed. The chosen subject must lead to the production of an original piece of work that is achievable within the set deadline. The supervisor ensures that the student has all the necessary skills to carry out the planned research, particularly in terms of initiative and innovation.

#### **5. Joining a research unit**

Doctoral students are assigned to a host laboratory or team. Their thesis supervisor introduces them to the host research unit, its research themes and rights and duties of its members.

Doctoral students have access to all the resources needed to carry out their research (tools, equipment, IT resources, documentation, etc.). In return they agree to respect the rules of collective life, in particular the rules governing attendance, safety and discipline in force in the laboratory, the rules for using tools and documentation and, if applicable, the research unit rules and regulations. They must also attend seminars, conferences, round tables and symposia organised by their own laboratory or, depending on the case, by one of the laboratories in the Doctoral School.

Doctoral students must also respect scientific ethics, including the regulations on intellectual property and confidentiality.

Doctoral students are entitled to personal supervision from their supervisor and any co-supervisor.

#### **6. Supervising and monitoring progress**

The thesis supervisor commits to supervising a reasonable number of theses, as set out in the Academic Regulations. The doctoral student must be informed of the number of thesis being supervised by his/her supervisor.

Thesis supervisors (and any co-supervisors) and doctoral students agree to meet regularly and frequently.

Doctoral students must honour their commitments regarding the amount of time required and the pace of their work. They have a duty to their thesis supervisor or co-supervisors to keep them informed of any difficulties encountered and the progress of their thesis.

Thesis supervisors, who are called upon because of their recognised expertise in the field of research studied, must supervise doctoral students' research by helping them to identify the innovative nature and relevance of their subject, to discover the main lines of research and to structure their research and its results.

Thesis supervisors agree to monitor the progress of the work on a regular basis and to discuss any new directions it may take in the light of the results already obtained. It is the supervisors' duty to provide doctoral students, as early as possible, with any positive feedback and/or objections and criticisms that their work may give rise to. Repeated failures to comply with these commitments can result in a joint report between doctoral students and their thesis supervisor, which may lead to a mediation procedure. If the thesis supervisor or one of the co-supervisors is unable to carry out his/her duties, the host research unit and the Doctoral School will determine how the doctoral student's work is to be pursued.

Doctoral students present the results of their research at meetings organised by their team and during individual interviews with the Thesis Committee. They agree to provide a progress report on their work to the Doctoral School, in accordance with the monitoring procedure set up by the Board, and, if necessary, to the funding organisation when required by the agreement signed with the latter.

Doctoral students undertake to comply with all the obligations set out in their funding agreement, in particular: regular reports, reference to the funding organisation in information, dissemination or publication documents relating to their thesis.

The Thesis Committee monitors doctoral students' progress on the basis of the Doctoral School Charter and the training contract. It assesses, in an interview with doctoral students, the conditions of their training and the progress of their research. It makes recommendations and sends a report on the interview to the director of the Doctoral School, the doctoral student and the thesis supervisor.

**If an act of violence (sexist, sexual, etc.), harassment (sexual, moral, etc.) or discrimination (gender, religion, etc.) is reported, the host institution and La Rochelle Université undertake to protect the person concerned. The latter must contact the Doctoral School as soon as possible or report to the "L'Université me protège" helpline via the email [luniversitemeprotege@univ-lr.fr](mailto:luniversitemeprotege@univ-lr.fr), which will provide a written answer within 72 hours.**

## **7. Completing the thesis**

As a general rule, preparation of a thesis within the Doctoral School takes three years of full-time research (in other cases, it may take up to six years).

By way of derogation, extensions may be granted by the head of the university, on the recommendation of the thesis supervisor and after receiving the opinion of the Thesis Committee and the director of the Doctoral School, at the reasoned request of the doctoral student.

The length of a doctoral training programme for a student with disability may be extended by the head of the institution at the reasoned request of the student.

If doctoral students have been on maternity leave, paternity leave, childcare or adoption leave, parental leave, sick leave for more than four consecutive months or leave of at least two months following a work accident, the preparation period for the thesis is extended by the time equal to the period of leave if they so request.

In accordance with the decree of 25 May 2026, exceptionally and on the basis of a reasoned request from the doctoral student, a study gap of up to one year may be accepted. In this case, the doctoral student temporarily interrupts their studies but remains enrolled at the university if they so wish. This period is not included in the overall length of the thesis preparation.

In all cases, preparing for a thesis requires students to re-enrol each year with the institution where they are preparing for their degree. Students and their supervisors must inform the Doctoral School if they wish to stop working on a thesis. Except in the case of a gap year, any interruption of the thesis, as evidenced by a discontinuation of enrolment, is considered to be a withdrawal.

## **8. Doctoral training programmes, training contract and student portfolio**

In theory, doctoral students must complete 90 hours of training during the first three years of the programme. The Doctoral School is in charge of organising this training.

In application of this Doctoral School Charter, a training contract is signed by the thesis supervisor and doctoral student at the time of the first enrolment and may be revised annually. This agreement specifies the scientific, material and financial conditions that must guarantee the proper conduct of the student's research work and the preparation of his/her thesis.

A student portfolio must be produced, containing a personalised list of all the activities carried out during their training, including teaching, dissemination of scientific culture or technology transfer, and highlighting the skills they have developed during the preparation of their thesis. This document must be regularly updated by the doctoral student. Training undertaken in an institution outside the Doctoral School may be approved by the Doctoral School management.

Unless exempted, doctoral students will only be authorised to defend their thesis if they have received the necessary approvals to complete their doctoral training.

## **9. Thesis defence**

Applications to defend a thesis are processed by the Doctoral School in accordance with the procedure established by the decree of 25 May 2016 setting out the national framework for training and the procedures leading to the award of the doctoral degree.

After the defence, and if admitted, PhD recipients have to take an oath, undertaking to respect the principles and requirements of scientific integrity throughout their professional career, whatever the field of activity.

The oath of scientific integrity reads:

**“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 research, demonstrated intellectual rigour, 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.”**

## **10. Dissemination, publication and valorisation of the thesis**

The quality and reach of doctoral students' research are measured by its dissemination and by the publications, patents and industrial reports to which the thesis or articles based on it have given rise. At the start of the thesis, doctoral students and their supervisors agree on publication objectives for the duration of the thesis. Doctoral candidates should be encouraged to present the results of their thesis at scientific conferences, symposia or study days.

The dissemination and publication of the results of doctors' research must comply with their copyright. Doctoral students must be identified as authors or co-authors of communications, publications, patents or industrial reports presenting the results of their thesis work. Their signatures must be followed by the name of the university, and any other supervisory bodies, and of the research laboratory of which they are a member, in accordance with the rules and practices of the institution.

The university is responsible for the storage, management and dissemination of theses defended within the institution, in accordance with the rules governing intellectual property and in application of the decree of 25 May 2016.

The university also ensures that theses are available online, after providing doctoral students with the Charter for the Electronic Submission and Distribution of Theses and after doctors have signed a form authorising the institution to publish their theses online.

La Rochelle Université promotes the conduct of doctoral students' research in accordance with the requirements of scientific integrity and research ethics. Doctoral students have access to training in the principles and requirements of research ethics and scientific integrity. They undertake to comply with these principles and requirements throughout their doctorate. La Rochelle Université, Doctoral School directors, thesis supervisors, research unit managers and all those supervising or taking part in the work of doctoral students undertake to encourage and support this commitment.

## **11. Mediation process**

Any persistent dispute between the supervisor or one of the co-supervisors and the student concerning the application of the rights and obligations defined in the present Charter must be brought to the attention of the manager of the research unit and the director of the Doctoral School or the deputy director representing the student's scientific field. After consultation, they will try to find a solution.

If mediation fails and the dispute persists, the most diligent party may appeal to the President of the University, who will act as mediator.

## **12. Copyright**

Plagiarism consists of appropriating the work of others, i.e., using and reproducing the result of this work (text or part of text, image, graph, photo, data, etc.) without specifying that it comes from someone else. Plagiarism is a very serious violation of scientific ethics. The signatories of this Charter undertake to cite, in accordance with professional standards, the works they use or reproduce in part, including documents available online.

Failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action. Disciplinary proceedings are without prejudice to possible legal action in cases where plagiarism is also characterised as forgery.

Doctoral students acknowledge that they are aware of the rules governing literary and artistic property and agree to comply with them. In accordance with article L.122-4 of the French Intellectual Property Code, any representation or reproduction in whole or in part made without the consent of the author or his rights holders is illegal. The same applies to translation, adaptation or transformation, arrangement or reproduction by any art or process whatsoever. Apart from the exceptions mentioned in article L.122-5 of the French Intellectual Property Code (particularly the publication of extracts), students must request the necessary authorisations from the authors or their rights holders.

### **13. Intellectual property**

During the preparation of their thesis, students receive scientific and technical support from the university and have access to the knowledge and expertise of the laboratory in which they carry out their work. In this environment, during the course of their research project, they may obtain results that are the subject of intellectual property rights.

Students agree to inform their thesis supervisor and research unit director and, in the case of results that can be commercialised, including software and biological materials, the institution's knowledge transfer department (University, CNRS) and, if applicable, the employer who pays for the research work. They undertake to comply with the intellectual property rights attached to these results.

Employed doctoral students are subject to the legal regime for employee inventions set out in the French Intellectual Property Code (article 611-7).

The results obtained by non-employed doctoral students are handled as follows: if the university expresses an interest, the parties will negotiate in good faith the conditions for exploiting the said results in the best interests of both the student and the university, if necessary, within the framework of an assignment of rights. Otherwise, the university transfers its rights to the doctoral students.

If information contained in a publication or communication project needs to be protected under intellectual property law (e.g., patent, declaration to the Agence pour la Protection des Programmes, etc.), it is agreed that publication (or communication) may be delayed for a period defined in advance in consultation with the thesis supervisor and the institution's Knowledge Transfer Department.

If the student can be recognised as an inventor (or author) as defined by the French Intellectual Property Code, his/her name will be mentioned as such on the intellectual property title in question.

Once the thesis has been completed, the laboratory notebook, for those disciplines that use it, will remain the property of the institution. The student may receive a copy, subject to the rules of confidentiality in force.

Director of the Doctoral School  
Prof. A. Karim Aït-Mokhtar



The president of the University

By delegation, the Director of Research and  
Administration of the LUDI Institute

Jean-Marc Wallet

