

Code of Good Practice for Doctoral Schools (October 2023)

This document provides guidelines for good practice that are binding for all doctoral schools at the University of Vienna. Schools can propose additional responsibilities (in an “Addendum”) that go beyond those listed below.

1. Responsibilities of the director of doctoral school

The director of the school is an internationally renowned scholar. The director is appointed by the rectorate for a period of 2 years, the Deans of the involved Faculties provide statements of support. Directors can apply for a teaching reduction.

The director of the school:

- a) applies for the (continuation of) the school and proposes the leadership team and other elements of the governance (e.g. advisory board)
- b) represents the school to the Rectorate, its members and the outside world
- c) assumes the responsibilities of the DSPL (to be appointed in the usual way) and must oversee the activities, of which some of them can be delegated according to the School’s governance to a vice-DSPL).
- d) oversees compliance with the University’s general rules, the Code of good practice and with additional guidelines of the school (if any, named in an “addendum”);
- e) negotiates the budget with the Rectorate;
- f) oversees spending decisions, including those made by the internal committees, e.g. concerning travel grants or grants for workshops organized by candidates;
- g) provides an annual report to the Rectorate and the general public about the activities of the school, including key performance indicators;
- h) ensures that the programme and especially the relevant job openings are internationally and transparently advertised;
- i) organises the admission process;
- j) ensures that each doctoral candidate is assigned to at least one supervisor and has access to other researchers in the school for advice and feedback;
- k) supports and promotes the implementation of TACs (Thesis Advisory Committees);
- l) organises and oversees the teaching program (e.g. seminars, courses);
- m) organises the recurrent public (e.g. faculty-wide) presentation of the dissertation projects in consultation with the doctoral advisory board(s);
- n) ensures that doctoral candidates have sufficient time to study and work on their thesis according to the employment contract and the general employment regulations (KV);
- o) approves the dissertation agreement as well as the annual progress reports by candidates;
- p) oversees the progress of the doctoral candidates;
- q) initiates the dissertation examination process in line with University regulations (including the selection of reviewers and the composition of the committee for the public defence);
- r) organizes measures of career planning (e.g. coaching, mentoring) and placements for doctoral candidates;
- s) provides measures and procedures for conflict resolution (if necessary in cooperation with other relevant bodies of the university).

2. Responsibilities of supervisors

Every doctoral candidate has one main supervisor and access to at least one other member of the school (including advanced post docs) who provide complementary advice and feedback. Each school defines the role and range of activities for additional supervisors. Main supervisors are research-active members of the school and are assigned to the candidate (in agreement with the supervisor) by the director.

The main supervisor:

- a) promotes the scientific development of the doctoral candidate to become an independent researcher;
- b) commits to supervising the doctoral candidate for the duration of the PhD project and provides regular comments on the candidate's progress and manuscripts and doctoral thesis draft;
- c) clarifies the expectations for supervision using the available forms: for admission, the doctoral candidate and all supervisors sign the indication of willingness to supervise the doctoral candidate and a doctoral thesis agreement, which is amended through annual progress reports once a year;
- d) supports the doctoral candidate to prepare the public presentation at the end of the first study year;
- e) clarifies ownership of the data generated during the thesis research with the doctoral candidate;
- f) ensures together with the director of the school that the candidate can devote sufficient time for the candidate's own research, personal and professional development and the activities offered by the school;
- g) ensures together with the director of the school that the candidate has access to relevant infrastructure;
- h) stays updated about the latest progress in the doctoral candidate's research field;
- i) encourages that the results are presented and published in relevant outlets;
- j) verifies that the final thesis complies with the criteria set by the university (e.g. affiliations policy);
- k) helps to enforce compliance with the Code of Good Scientific Practice of the University of Vienna;
- l) helps the candidate to apply for complementary funding;
- m) assists the doctoral candidate in career planning;
- n) contributes to the reputation and the success of the doctoral school;
- o) supports the doctoral candidate in setting up a TAC (Thesis Advisory Committee);
- p) provides the necessary support and feedback for the yearly TAC (Thesis Advisory Committee) meetings.

3. Responsibilities of the doctoral candidate

Admission (“Zulassung”) as a Doctoral student to the University of Vienna and admission (“Aufnahme”) to the school are prerequisites to be a member of the school. The school can define particular offers and services (e.g. travel grants) that are restricted to its members and other offers and services that are open to all admitted (“zugelassen”) doctoral candidates of the field. Membership in the school can be made dependent on fulfilment of particular obligations (e.g. participation in seminars, presentation of preliminary results etc.).

The doctoral candidate:

- a) clarifies the expectations for supervision and agrees upon the practical aspects of supervision using the available forms (Doctoral thesis agreement and annual progress reports);
- b) fulfils the requirements of the doctoral school, the curriculum and the doctoral thesis agreement agreed upon at the time of admission, especially the public presentation at the end of the first study year (FÖP);
- c) is responsible for setting up a TAC (Thesis Advisory Committee) in close consultation with the supervisor;
- d) organizes and prepares adequately for the yearly TAC meeting (in the line with the school requirements);
- d) presents their progress at least once a year to the faculty of the school (for instance in the yearly TAC meeting) ;
- e) takes the supervisor(s) guidance and feedback into due consideration;
- f) participates actively in courses, workshops, symposia and other respective events which promote integration into the scientific community;
- g) is committed to the doctoral project and understands that the research work and completion of the doctoral degree studies are ultimately their own responsibility;
- h) ensures that the thesis is their own work and that the final version has been read and commented upon by the supervisor(s) prior to submission for examination;
- i) adopts and understands the protocol of good scientific practice, the general principles of ethical aspects in science and the ethical regulations of the research field;
- j) becomes familiar with the relevant high-quality outlets (journals, proceedings, series, etc.) suitable for publishing the results;
- k) includes the University of Vienna as an affiliation on publications resulting from the doctoral project;
- l) alerts the supervisor and the director of the doctoral school of any difficulties or delays at an early stage and address these issues honestly in the annual progress reports;
- m) provides a regular (at least annual) progress report.

4. Responsibilities of the TAC (Thesis Advisory Committee)

The TAC members are responsible for monitoring the doctoral student's progress and professional development. The members give external advice and support to the student and supervisor(s). The thesis committee consists of the supervisor(s) plus 2 or 3 mentors of the respective research area of the thesis topic. The mentors should at least have Senior PostDoc level with profound international research experience. The TAC should meet once a year and the format of the meeting is determined by the school. The implementation of a TAC is not mandatory, but strongly recommended by the rectorate.

The TAC (Thesis Advisory Committee):

- a) provides advice and supports to both the doctoral student and supervisor(s);
- b) monitors and supports the progress of the Thesis project as well as the professional and personal development of the doctoral candidate;
- c) monitors and helps aligning the expectations and progress perception of the doctoral candidate and the supervisor(s);
- d) assesses the student-supervisor relationship and mediates in case of misunderstandings or conflicts;
- e) provides feedback and advice on career perspectives.