



**Εθνική Αρχή
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης**
Hellenic Authority
for Higher Education

STANDARDS FOR QUALITY ACCREDITATION OF DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

SEPTEMBER 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Strategy, quality assurance policy and quality goal setting for the Doctoral Programmes	3
2. Design and approval of Doctoral Programmes.....	4
3. Regulations for the admission of doctoral students, the principle of equal opportunities, inclusiveness, the doctoral thesis supervision, the completion and the recognition of the doctoral studies	5
4. Learning resources and doctoral students support.....	7
5. Information management	8
6. Public information concerning the Doctoral Programmes.....	9
7. On-going monitoring and periodic internal evaluation of Doctoral Programmes	10
8. Regular external evaluation and accreditation of the Doctoral Programmes	11

1. STRATEGY, QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND QUALITY GOAL SETTING FOR THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD INCLUDE IN THEIR RESEARCH STRATEGY THE DEVELOPMENT, ORGANISATION AND DELIVERY OF DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES, EITHER ON THE INDIVIDUAL SCIENTIFIC FIELDS OF THE ACADEMIC UNITS, OR OF INTERDISCIPLINARY NATURE, OR IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS. THE ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY FOR THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES THAT WILL BE SPECIFIED THROUGH ANNUAL GOALS AND WILL PROMOTE THE INSTITUTION'S RESEARCH STRATEGY.

The quality assurance policy should expand and be aimed (also with the collaboration of external stakeholders) at the Doctoral Programme of the academic unit. This policy should be published and implemented by all stakeholders. The academic culture is quality-oriented and focuses on the continuous improvement of the Doctoral Programme. The quality assurance policy is more effective when it reflects the link between research and learning, taking into account the national framework as well as the strategic approach of the Institution. Such a policy supports:

- the organisation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) also in the doctoral studies level
- the participation of the departments, the schools, other organisational-scientific units (e.g. research centres), the leadership, individual staff members, as well as the encouragement of the doctoral students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance
- the academic integrity and freedom, the vigilance against academic fraud
- the prevention and treatment of any kind of discrimination against doctoral students, and the academic community in general
- the involvement of external stakeholders, especially bodies in the field of economy and knowledge, research partners, employers on the relevant field, professional associations, etc.

It is necessary that the quality goal setting includes special quality indicators related to the implementation of doctoral education and the research strategy of the Institution. For this reason, there exists a strong linkage between the evaluation of the research work of the Institution and the evaluation of the Doctoral Programmes, as well as of the research environment that constitutes the basis of the doctoral education.

For assessing the quality of the Doctoral Programmes, Institutions should develop indicators on: the individual progress of each doctoral student, the number of scientific publications, participation in conferences and research programmes, the rate of timely completion of thesis, the skills obtained, career tracking and dissemination of research results, the professional development of the researcher, etc.

Documentation/Annexes

D1.1 Institutional Research Strategy

D1.2 Quality Policy of the academic unit for the development and improvement of the Doctoral Programme

D1.3 Quality goal setting of the academic unit for the Doctoral Programme

D1.4 Elements of consultation with external stakeholders on the Doctoral Programme's Research Strategy and Quality Policy

2. DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE PROCEDURES FOR THE DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES. THE PROGRAMMES SHOULD BE DESIGNED SO AS TO RESPOND TO THE SET GOALS, INCLUDING THE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES. THE ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS ACQUIRED SHOULD BE CLEARLY DEFINED AND SHOULD REFER TO THE LEVEL 8 OF THE NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK.

The Doctoral Programmes:

- Are designed on the basis of aims, in line with the Institutional strategy.
- Have explicit intended learning outcomes of level 8 of the National and European Qualifications Framework.
- Are designed with the participation of the PhD candidates and other interested parties.
- Allow for the smooth progression of the doctoral students' studies.
- Determine the expected workload, especially when courses with ECTS are included.
- Are subject to an official approval procedure, as provided by the institutional framework and the Institution's internal regulation.
- Provide the PhD candidates with academic knowledge as well as skills that can contribute to their personal development and can be applied in their future career.
- Internationalisation strategies should constitute a tool towards the enhancement of the quality of doctoral education and the development of the research capacity of the Institutions. Internationalisation is necessary in the doctoral education and is implemented in various ways, ranging from doctoral students of international scope, staff, events and invited speakers, to international joint Doctoral Programmes (joint study programmes, with common advisory committees and examiners and - as far as institutional requirements allow - common degree). Doctoral education should include the possibility of mobility.
- The provision of training to the PhD candidates in understanding the research ethics is important and should constitute priority for the Doctoral Programmes.
- The professional development of the PhD candidates includes, in addition to skills obtained through research, information on the wide range of career options for the PhD holders.

In order to obtain a doctoral degree, the candidates should prove their ability to conduct original, independent research, of acceptable quality in international level, in the field concerned, that is worthy of publishing in national and international level in peer-reviewed journals.

The term doctoral education marks a period of individual research experience that leads to a university degree and certifies the development of a "research identity" of the PhD candidate. PhD candidates should demonstrate creative spirit together with commitment to their scientific goals and should be in a position to defend their research thesis, during the final stage, before the special seven-member committee.

Documentation/Annexes

D2.1 Senate Decision for the establishment of the Doctoral Programme (Law 4957/2022, article 91)

D2.2 Doctoral Programme structure: duration, courses, ECTS, expected learning outcomes for NQF level 8, quality requirements of the thesis, etc.

D2.3 Required qualifications of the teaching staff for supervising PhD theses

3. REGULATIONS FOR THE ADMISSION OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS, THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, INCLUSIVENESS, THE DOCTORAL THESIS SUPERVISION, THE COMPLETION AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE DOCTORAL STUDIES.

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH REGULATIONS COVERING ADMISSION, AS WELL AS ALL PHASES OF STUDIES, THE SUPERVISION OF THE DOCTORAL STUDENTS, PROGRESSION, COMPLETION AND RECOGNITION OF STUDIES, AND CERTIFICATION.

All the issues from the beginning to the end of the doctoral studies should be governed by the internal regulations of the academic units. Indicatively, the following should be regulated:

- the selection criteria, the admission procedure of the candidates and the required supporting documents
- the doctoral students' rights and obligations, and the monitoring of their progression
- the possibility of granting scholarships and of research funding
- the observance of the research ethics regulation by all parties concerned
- the obligations of the teaching staff, the supervision and counselling procedures
- the procedures and terms for writing and publishing scientific work
- the procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and for the assurance of the progress of doctoral students in their studies, as well as
- the terms and conditions for enhancing mobility

The advisory procedure plays an essential role in doctoral studies. This procedure is subject to clearly-defined written responsibilities allocated to the main supervisor, the advisory committee, the Department and the Institution, in the context of the doctoral studies regulation, while allowing for the individual development of the PhD candidate.

The structured Doctoral Programmes should develop admission strategies which are appropriate to their particular mission and profile. The admission strategies should be linked to specific results, clearly defining the desired candidates' profiles. These profiles should be based on equal treatment of a series of different attributes or features ensuring equal opportunities. In this way, the admission policies could take into account criteria such as the international origin, gender equality, social background, or the various age groups.

Admission should assess the research capacity of the candidates, in respect of the previous performance, and, most of all, the potential of the candidates to succeed in the programme they are admitted.

The admission policies should be transparent and reflect the Institution's research and financial capacity. Transparency and accountability should be enhanced through a single and recognisable mode of submission of applications, while it should be based on a well-defined and published set of criteria.

The Doctoral Programmes should apply specific procedures for a) monitoring the progress of the PhD candidates, at regular periods (e.g. annual progress report) or through a single implementation (e.g. interim oral examination / documented progress report) b) the successful completion of the thesis and its presentation, or c) deregistration from the Programme due to insufficient progress.

Documentation/Annexes

D3.1 Departmental Regulation for doctoral studies (Law 4957/2022, article 91)

D3.2 Regulation of Studies for each individual Doctoral Programme (admission criteria for doctoral students, advisory procedure, terms for carrying out assignments, monitoring of progress, rights and obligations of the doctoral students and the staff, criteria and conditions for the PhD degree award, etc.), unless it is part of the general departmental regulation for doctoral studies

D3.3 Research Ethics Regulation

D3.4 PhD degree template

4. LEARNING RESOURCES AND DOCTORAL STUDENTS SUPPORT

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE APPROPRIATE FUNDING TO COVER LEARNING AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES, AND SHOULD ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE AND ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO THE DOCTORAL STUDENTS.

Institutions provide a number of resources to support learning and research work of doctoral students. These resources may vary from physical resources such as libraries, study facilities, laboratories and IT infrastructure, to support staff, academic advisors, administrative services, etc. The needs of a diverse student body (such as mature, young, employed and international students, as well as students with disabilities) and the shift towards doctoral student-centred learning, are considered during the allocation, design and provision of learning resources and support services.

Support activities and facilities can be organised in a way that creates an attractive academic environment. However, the Institution's internal quality assurance guarantees that all resources are fit for purpose and accessible, and that the doctoral students are informed about the available services.

High quality doctoral education requires efficient, sustainable funding, as well as additional funding opportunities for specialised doctoral degrees (e.g. industrial doctorates). A successful structured programme requires funding for scholarships or salaries for PhD candidates and appropriate research equipment. The same applies for the management of the natural space where the programmes function and for the new types of research environments, open offices or centres, which contribute to the creation of inclusive research communities. The possibility of raising and management of external funding for scholarships and salaries will enhance the capacity of the Institutions and the Departments to participate in flexible strategies for attracting the best candidates.

Documentation/Annexes

D4.1 Detailed description of the infrastructure and services made available by the Institution and the academic unit to the Doctoral Programme, for the support of the academic and research activity (human resources, laboratories, special equipment, central facilities and digital systems, services etc.)

D4.2 Policy and good practices of the academic unit for the funding of the doctoral studies

5. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

INSTITUTIONS BEAR FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTING, ANALYSING AND USING INFORMATION, AIMED AT THE EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF DOCTORAL STUDIES AND RESEARCH, AS WELL AS RELATED ACTIVITIES, IN AN INTEGRATED, OPERATIONAL AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE MANNER.

Institutions are expected to establish and operate an information system for monitoring data concerning Doctoral Programmes, doctoral students, progression of studies and thesis, scientific publications of PhD candidates, teaching staff, course structure and organisation.

The academic units disseminate and collect questionnaires to assess doctoral students' satisfaction with studies, supervision and advisory procedures, learning environment and services.

Reliable data is essential for accurate information and decision-making, as well as for identifying areas of smooth operation and areas for improvement. Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on Doctoral Programmes and other activities feed data into the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS).

The following are of interest:

- key performance indicators of PhD candidates
- progression, progress and time of completion of studies, success and drop-out rates
- student satisfaction with their programmes, counselling, supervision procedure, availability of resources and support services

Documentation/Annexes

D5.1 Reports from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA)

D5.2 List of PhD theses that have been carried out in the academic unit during the last five years

D5.3 Operation of information system for the collection of administrative data of the Doctoral Programme delivery (student records), and other tools and procedures designed for the collection of data related to the academic and administrative operation of the department and the Doctoral Programme

6. PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES IN A DIRECT AND READILY ACCESSIBLE WAY. THE RELEVANT INFORMATION SHOULD BE UP-TO-DATE, OBJECTIVE AND CLEAR.

Information on the Institutions' activities on doctoral studies is useful for prospective and current doctoral students, as well as other stakeholders, and the public.

Therefore, Institutions and their academic units must provide information through their websites about their doctoral studies and research activities, regulations, achievements, progress, completed theses by year and by subject (list of theses published on the department's webpage), the learning procedures applied, internal and external evaluation and accreditation of the programme, the employment perspectives of graduates/ doctors, the research programmes and funding opportunities, the scholarships, etc.

Documentation/Annexes

D6.1 Procedure for the maintenance and update of the Doctoral Programme's webpage

7. ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC INTERNAL EVALUATION OF DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS AND ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THEM, THROUGH MONITORING AND POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS, WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THIS CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

The regular monitoring, review, and revision of Doctoral Programmes aim at maintaining the level of educational provisions and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for the doctoral students.

The above comprise the evaluation of:

- the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the Doctoral Programme is up to date
- the changing needs of society and the labour market
- the students' workload, progression and completion of studies
- the effectiveness of the educational procedures
- the doctoral students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme
- the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the Doctoral Programme in question

The internal evaluation of the Doctoral Programmes is carried out by the QAU, in cooperation with the department's internal evaluation group (IEG), according to the written procedure included in the quality manual of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS).

Doctoral Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving doctoral students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date.

Documentation/Annexes

D7.1 Procedure for the review, adjustment and update of the Doctoral Programme

D7.2 Results of the last annual internal evaluation of the Doctoral Programme by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), and the relevant minutes

8. REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY PANELS OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY THE HAHE, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. THE TERM OF VALIDITY OF THE ACCREDITATION IS DETERMINED BY THE HAHE.

The HAHE is responsible for administrating the external evaluation and accreditation of the Doctoral Programmes which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by External Evaluation and Accreditation Panels (EEAP). The HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, based on the Reports delivered by the panels, with a specific term of validity, following to which, revision is required.

The quality accreditation of the Doctoral Programmes acts as a means for the determination of the degree of compliance of the programme to the Standards, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees.

Both academic units and Institutions must consistently consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the programme, and draft progress reports for monitoring how weaknesses are addressed and goals are achieved.

Documentation/Annexes

D8.1 Report by the academic unit on the recently implemented improvements on the Doctoral Programme