

# FACULTY CHARTER FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The faculty charter for doctoral students and supervisors serves as a preamble for agreements between doctoral students and their (different) supervisors, and constitutes a framework to the university-wide [charter for doctoral students and supervisors](#).

Doctoral students and supervisors are committed to:

- acting in a respectable way with each other
- showing interest in each other
- having confidence in each other
- being considerate of each other

Supervisors are the first, but not the only, point of contact for the doctoral students during the doctoral trajectory. Doctoral students will be invited to communicate about content-related, as well as practical and psychosocial aspects of the work within and outside their own department and research group. The faculty expects its supervisors to engage in (in)formal discussions about the coaching process with the doctoral students, and to keep a record of these discussions.

The faculty guarantees that:

- its supervisors are available; the faculty invites supervisors to do courses about guidance and providing feedback
- it has sufficient points of contacts where content-related, practical, psychosocial and/or deontological problems may be addressed
- it will adopt clear procedures to prevent and tackle any content-related, practical, psychosocial and/or deontological problems as much as possible

The departments and/or research groups:

- guarantee that there will be a formal point of contact to identify any problems and concerns. By default, the points of contact are the department chair and the research group coordinator respectively.
- ensure that new researchers may present themselves and their research to the rest of the department and/or research group
- facilitate initiatives through reading sessions, brainstorm sessions and workshops to promote contact and exchange across all the departments, offices and research groups

Doctoral students and supervisors make specific agreements with each other. These agreements concern the way the individual guidance and feedback will be organised, the assignments that are to be completed in addition to the doctoral research, the buddy system, (co-)publications, and the financial and logistics support of the research.

The following people have a mandate to act as faculty point of contact:

- the OAP (Other Academic Staff) representatives in the Faculty Board
- the department chairs
- the faculty trusted representatives
- the faculty ombudspersons

# 1 INDIVIDUAL GUIDANCE AND FEEDBACK

## 1.1 Welcome talk, tour and presentation

Doctoral students have a welcome talk, get acquainted with the faculty and department structure, are given a tour and are introduced to their colleagues. A buddy (see point 3) will be assigned in consultation.

- When: preferably on the first working day of the doctoral student
- Attendance (mandatory): doctoral student, supervisors
- Attendance (optional): other members of the doctoral advisory committee (DBC), buddies, department chair, research group coordinator

Documents handed out:

- Faculty doctoral brochure
- Faculty charter for doctoral students and supervisors

## 1.2 Welcome talk

The doctoral student and the supervisors have a welcome talk and establish in joint consultation some arrangements.

- When: at the start of the doctoral project
- Attendance: doctoral student, supervisors

On the agenda:

- Assignments, responsibilities and objectives of the doctoral student
- Assignments, responsibilities and objectives of the supervisors
- Indicative timing for formal reflection and feedback moments
- Composition, assignments and frequency of the meetings of the doctoral advisory committee (DBC)
- The expected nature and scope of the assignments other than the doctoral research (educational activities, administration, ...)
- Study programmes that are to be followed, whether or not as part of the Doctoral School
- The ethical aspects of the research
- Publication strategy
- Valorisation strategy (participation in conferences, science communication, ...)
- Availability of the supervisor
- Rights and duties concerning telework
- Rights and duties concerning holidays and leave
- Possible forms of financial support and the deployment of funds
- Possible forms of logistics support

*The arrangements are to be written down, dated, signed by the doctoral student and the administrative supervisor responsible and delivered to the doctoral advisory committee (DBC) members for information. Both the doctoral student and the administrative supervisor responsible shall receive a copy.*

## 1.3 Informal consultations

Informal consultations are held between the doctoral student and the supervisors.

These are regular consultations and advice that are part of the normal guidance process of the supervisors. The nature, scope and frequency are dependent on the course of the research and the supervisor's and doctoral student's diary. A minimum of arrangements about these consultations are contrived during the welcome talk.

## 1.4 Formal reflection and feedback consultations

Formal reflection and feedback consultations are held between the doctoral student and the supervisors.

- When: at least once a year, the first consultation round takes place 6 months after the welcome talk
- Attendance (mandatory): doctoral student, supervisors
- Attendance (optional): other doctoral advisory committee (DBC) members, department chair, research group coordinator

During the formal reflection and feedback consultations, the ongoing research is discussed, adjusted and improved when necessary. The consultations also serve as a two-way performance appraisal. The following points are monitored (and adjusted if necessary):

- Arrangements pertaining to the doctoral research
- Arrangements pertaining to the other assignments of the doctoral student
- Arrangements pertaining to the programmes that are to be followed
- Arrangements pertaining to the publication and valorisation strategy
- Arrangements pertaining to the assignments, responsibilities and objectives of the supervisors
- Any changes of buddies

The consultations enable students to reflect on their academic and/or non-academic career development. The consultations also provide the supervisors with a good opportunity to assess the psychosocial well-being of the doctoral student. An additional formal reflection and feedback moment may be organised if the student or supervisor so desires.

*New arrangements or changes to previous arrangements are to be written down, dated, signed by the doctoral student and the administrative supervisor responsible and delivered to the doctoral advisory committee (DBC) members for information. Both the doctoral student and the administrative supervisor responsible shall receive a copy.*

## 1.5 The doctoral advisory committee (DBC)

The doctoral advisory committee formulates an annual report on the doctoral student's progress in their research and their doctoral training programme.

- When: once a year
- What: written report and conversation

The report is based on the progress report of the doctoral student and its contents are communicated

in a personal conversation with the student. The following people may attend the conversation (via videoconferencing, if necessary): the doctoral student, the supervisors, the other doctoral advisory committee (DBC) members.

During the welcome talk between the supervisors and the doctoral student, the composition of the doctoral advisory committee (DBC) is discussed. The doctoral student may nominate possible members. The composition of the doctoral advisory committee (DBC) can be amended in dialogue with the supervisors and the doctoral student (via a new decision by the Faculty Board).

*The responsibilities of the doctoral advisory committee (DBC) are described in general terms in the faculty doctoral brochure. They may be specified in the arrangements that are contrived during the welcome talk and the formal reflection and feedback moments. The doctoral advisory committee (DBC) members will receive a copy of these arrangements. Supervisors and doctoral students are encouraged to involve the doctoral advisory committee (DBC) in the doctoral process as actively as possible.*

## **2 ASSIGNMENTS OTHER THAN THE DOCTORAL RESEARCH**

Within the limits set out in their mandate, assistants spend 70% (min. 50%) of their work time on their own research, in accordance with the Global Faculty Policy Plan. Other doctoral students, i.e. scholarship students and research staff, may be subject to the FWO (Research Foundation Flanders) guideline: they may not spend more than 8 hours (in total 240 hours per academic year) on assignments other than their research tasks or teach more than 4 contact hours per week.

The nature and scope of the additional assignments are to be specified during the welcome talk and the formal reflection and feedback moments. These assignments can relate to educational activities, administration and external services of the department(s), research group(s), office(s), study programme(s) and/or supervisor(s). The formal job description of the assistants and the previously made assignments are to be aligned.

Priority shall be given to assignments whereby doctoral students need to use specific skills and (academic or non-academic) career perspectives, that will enhance their CV and help broaden their expertise.

## **3 THE BUDDY SYSTEM**

Ghent University operates a buddy system, whereby all new staff members are assigned a buddy. For doctoral students, this is done in joint consultation with the supervisors. The buddy will welcome the student and be sympathetic to their concerns. After six months, the doctoral student may choose another buddy, preferably an OAP (Other Academic Staff) colleague who has already done research within the same department for at least two years. Buddies are registered at the department secretariat.

It is the responsibility of the supervisors to tell doctoral students that they can choose another buddy after they have been employed for six months. Doctoral students should inform their supervisors of their choice. It is also the supervisors' responsibility to appoint a new buddy in joint consultation with the doctoral student if the previous buddy is no longer available. Doctoral students may also choose

another buddy at a later stage.

A buddy exercises an advisory and caring role by having regular conversations with the doctoral student and assessing his/her well-being. The buddy should actively communicate the existence of university and faculty trusted representatives and ombudspersons, clarify their roles and give the doctoral student a referral, if necessary.

## **4 PUBLICATIONS AND CO-PUBLICATIONS**

At the start of the doctoral research, the supervisors and the doctoral student reflect on the [format of the dissertation](#) (Dutch) (monograph vs. article-based doctorate).

Research increasingly requires collaboration and often results in co-publications. However, the dissertation should make it possible to assess the doctoral student's individual merits. The supervisors and the doctoral students ensure that these individual merits can be assessed unambiguously.

Because co-publications may raise questions concerning authorship, the faculty has decided to adopt an [ethical code](#) about co-publications. This code contains a definition of authorship, formulates a list of criteria about authorship, and makes recommendations to reach concrete agreements in case of co-publications.

## **5 FINANCIAL AND LOGISTICS SUPPORT**

Scholarship students and project staff members generally have their own bench fee and/or funds of the project. During the welcome talk and the consultation sessions, the doctoral student and the supervisors make agreements about the allocation of funds (laptop, office equipment, books, travel costs,...) and any forms of logistics support. Assistants have department or office funds, in addition to the starting grant made available via the [Faculty Research Fund](#).

Supervisors will inform their doctoral students about the option to ask financial support with external financing institutions (for instance, the Research Foundation Flanders), the Doctoral School, the faculty (via the [Faculty Research Fund](#)) and the department or office.