

EVALUATION STANDARDS FOR DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

2022–2023 EVALUATION CAMPAIGN

ROUND C



PREAMBLE

The purpose of the evaluation standards for doctoral programmes is to assess the institution's doctoral policy and its impact on the activities and outcomes of the programmes overseen by each doctoral school. Doctoral education encompasses dimensions relating to research-based teaching and learning, the doctoral candidate's professional experience and doctoral supervision, all of which are detailed in these standards. The scope of the doctoral school also includes the contribution made to the doctoral programme by its affiliated research units and by the institution's support services.

The standards define the **three key categories used for self-evaluation and external evaluation**:

- **Domains:** The domains define the overall scope of the evaluation. Each domain is associated with at least one standard. The standards comprise five domains. Domains 1 to 4 focus on reviewing the reference period under evaluation. Domain 5, 'Key directions for the next five-year contract', concerns doctoral schools planning a major structural change (restructuring, split, merger, etc.) and requires them to present their project for the coming period.
- **Standards:** Standards set out the expectations for the evaluation by outlining the missions of the doctoral school as defined in the applicable regulatory texts, as well as the key guiding principles and practices of study programmes. They are formulated as actions that place the doctoral programme in a concrete evaluative context.
- **Criteria:** One or more criteria are associated with each standard. The criteria specify how each standard should be reflected in the self-evaluation reports of doctoral programmes. They set out the aspects that will be examined in order to determine the extent to which the programmes meet the expectations defined by the relevant standard.

Based on these standards, the self-evaluation report for a doctoral programme presents, for each doctoral school, the critical analyses and evidence relating to the standards and criteria. It also specifies the content of each of the first four domains for the review of the standard, as well as the development prospects for each domain for the next five-year contract.

These standards are completed by the document '**Guidelines for the self-evaluation of doctoral programmes**'. This document sets out the context in which Hcéres conducts its evaluation. The document includes best practices and expectations regarding the self-evaluation of study programmes. It further clarifies key aspects of the standards, particularly the expectations attached to them and the criteria applied according to the type and characteristics of the study programmes and the higher education institution delivering them.

DOMAIN 1: THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME POLICY WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Five standards (1 to 5) define the scope of this domain. Their purpose is to assess the policy and defining features of the doctoral programme delivered within the scope of the doctoral school. More specifically, these standards aim to assess their impact on the study programme's activities and outcomes, as well as how the programme monitors this impact and how such monitoring relates to the programme's objectives.

Standard 1: The doctoral programme developed and implemented within the scope of the doctoral school is consistent with the higher education institution's positioning and strategy.

- C1. The scope of the doctoral school covers one or more scientific fields. Each field is divided into one or more doctoral disciplines. These fields are supported by the scientific priorities of high-quality, recognised research units to which it is attached.

- C2. The doctoral programme delivered within this scope is aligned with the institution's scientific priorities and thematic focus areas.
- C3. The doctoral programme is structured in coordination with second-cycle study programmes (postgraduate programmes) and, where relevant, with third-cycle study programmes (doctoral programmes) in the health sciences field. Where applicable, it forms part of an integrated master's and doctoral programme pathway, delivered by a University Research School (EUR) or a Graduate School (GS).
- C4. The doctoral programme integrates the benefits of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary education into its objectives and content.
- C5. The doctoral programme integrates the challenges of sustainable development, which shape doctoral students' approach and research work.
- C6. With the contribution of its partners, the doctoral programme includes scientific, professional-development and scientific-communication events and activities.
- C7. The doctoral programme draws on the activities carried out and the resources secured under the Initiative of Excellence and related projects funded by the Future Investment Programme to enhance its content and structures.

Standard 2: The structure of the doctoral programme is consistent with the higher education institution's organisation and represents added value for its partnerships.

- C1. Within its scope, the doctoral school ensures the implementation of the doctoral programme. In doing so, it coordinates with its affiliated research units, with other doctoral schools, higher education institution's constituent units and, where applicable, with higher education institution's doctoral college.
- C2. The school ensures the validity and added value of its academic partnerships, particularly in case of joint accreditation led by a regional coordination body or by the higher education institutions located on the site. Where applicable, the doctoral school specifies how its missions align with those of the site's doctoral college.

Standard 3: The doctoral programme includes research-based teaching and learning that supports the development of doctoral students' research work.

- C1. The doctoral programme's offering is structured in line with the doctoral school's scientific scope and incorporates training in the range of skills required to support the development of doctoral students' research work.
- C2. The academic staff and researchers associated with the doctoral school are involved in the doctoral programme.
- C3. The research study programme includes courses in research integrity and professional conduct, which shape the students' approach to their research work.
- C4. Research-based teaching and learning is underpinned by doctoral students' participation in the activities and scientific output of their affiliated research units both during and after their thesis.
- C5. The doctoral programme draws on library and documentation services, particularly for resource access and contributions to educational content.
- C6. The doctoral programme is grounded in an open-science approach, in which the processes for depositing theses and the research outputs of doctoral students and graduates are actively monitored and supported.

Standard 4: The doctoral programme is underpinned by a professional development policy aimed at enhancing the value of the doctoral degree.

- C1. The doctoral programme considers the social, economic and cultural needs of the region when defining its objectives and diversifying career opportunities across various sectors, including the academic sector. To this end, it involves social, economic and cultural partners in the development of the doctoral programme.
- C2. Doctoral programmes help doctoral students prepare for their future careers across a wide range of positions requiring a doctoral degree, including through entrepreneurship courses.
- C3. The doctoral school ensures that doctoral students' professional experience runs smoothly, notably by encouraging or requiring a funding contract for enrolment on a doctoral programme, and by adapting to the diversity of the student body.
- C4. The additional duties set out in the doctoral contract help doctoral students prepare for their future careers.

Standard 5: The doctoral programme has an international dimension.

- C1. The doctoral programme is underpinned by effective international partnerships established within the doctoral school's scope, in line with the priorities defined by the higher education institution.
- C2. The doctoral programme incorporates joint thesis supervision and outbound mobility for doctoral students, supported by strategic partnerships among stakeholders within its scope and by funding schemes.
- C3. The internationalisation of the doctoral programme benefits from the resources and support provided by the Initiative of Excellence and related projects under the Future Investment Programme, as well as, where applicable, a European alliance.

DOMAIN 2: STUDY PROGRAMMES, SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

Four standards (6 to 9) define the scope of this domain. Their purpose is to assess the study programmes and the support and supervision arrangements for doctoral students implemented within the scope of the doctoral school. More specifically, these standards evaluate the impact on the activities and outcomes of the doctoral programme, as well as how the doctoral school monitors these in relation to its objectives.

Standard 6: The doctoral programme defines and implements content and methods tailored to developing and enhancing doctoral students' skills.

- C1. The doctoral programme sets out and delivers the objectives, content and teaching methods, along with the procedures for validating the skills acquired by doctoral students, within a competency-based framework.
- C2. The doctoral programme is designed in line with the professional sectors targeted by the RNCP profiles relevant to its scope, as a part of a broader approach to recognising and promoting the doctorate degree as a professional qualification.
- C3. The doctoral programme recognises the skills acquired by doctoral students throughout their study programme and, in particular, through their research work. To this end, it relies in particular on the development of portfolios.

Standard 7: Doctoral students and candidates for the authorisation to supervise research (HDR) benefit from shared, high-quality recruitment and induction conditions.

- C1. The rules governing the recruitment of doctoral students are defined by the doctoral school in consultation with its partners, particularly the research units. These include the funding policy and the procedures for the recruitment and admission of doctoral students.
- C2. The rules governing the admission and enrolment of candidates for the authorisation to supervise research (HDR) are defined by the doctoral school or the higher education institution, in consultation with the latter. They set out the conditions for supporting an HDR and the procedures for authorising enrolment.
- C3. The arrangements for welcoming doctoral students within the doctoral school and in the research units are defined jointly by these bodies. They take into account the diversity of the admitted candidates.
- C4. Doctoral students have access to digital resources and physical spaces within the doctoral school, the research unit or the higher education institution to carry out their individual and collaborative research work.

Standard 8: Doctoral students and candidates for the authorisation to supervise research (HDR) benefit from high-quality supervision and support to ensure the smooth progress of their research.

- C1. The rules and procedures for the supervision and support of doctoral students are defined by the doctoral school in consultation with its partners.
- C2. The rules and procedures for monitoring and supporting candidates for the HDR are defined either within the doctoral school or at the level of the higher education institution, in consultation with the latter.
- C3. The composition and functioning of individual monitoring committees (CSI) comply with regulatory requirements. Their effective implementation is ensured by the doctoral school in coordination with the research units affiliated to it.
- C4. Doctoral students benefit from support mechanisms to carry out and promote their research. These include the material and financial conditions necessary for the completion of the doctoral degree.
- C5. The supervision arrangements for doctoral students and the support provided to HDR candidates incorporate measures to promote good practice, reduce discrimination and stereotypes, and prevent conflicts and harassment.
- C6. The rules and criteria governing the defence of doctoral theses are defined by the doctoral school in consultation with its partners. Their purpose is to verify the production of new knowledge and to ensure the quality of the doctoral degree. They may include conditions designed to encourage scientific output prior to the defence.
- C7. The rules and criteria for HDR defences are set by the doctoral school or the higher education institution, in agreement with the latter.

Standard 9: Doctoral programmes are adapted to the needs of international doctoral students.

- C1. The doctoral programme includes support mechanisms to facilitate the preparation and development of incoming and outgoing mobility for doctoral students.
- C2. The doctoral programme offers courses in a foreign language to support its internationalisation.

- C3. The doctoral programme includes studies delivered partly or fully online. The programme also uses digital tools for teaching and dissemination to facilitate access for remote participants, including doctoral students on international mobility schemes or conducting fieldwork.

DOMAIN 3: THE APPEAL, PERFORMANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME

Three standards (10 to 12) define the scope of this domain. Their purpose is to assess the outcomes of the doctoral programme delivered by the doctoral school in terms of its appeal, performance and relevance. These standards also evaluate how the doctoral school monitors these outcomes and implements improvements.

Standard 10: Monitoring student flows helps measure and strengthen the appeal of the doctoral programme.

- C1. The doctoral programme monitors its appeal by tracking and analysing trends in applications and enrolments.
- C2. The information systems implemented by the doctoral school or the higher education institution, together with the funding schemes established within its scope, strengthen the programme's visibility and appeal.

Standard 11: The support measures and flexible arrangements available to doctoral students help assess and improve the performance of the doctoral programme.

- C1. Support measures and flexibility arrangements for doctoral students contribute to the smooth running of their studies. These measures ensure that doctoral research runs smoothly. They include adapted study arrangements for students with specific needs.

Standard 12: Monitoring the career progression of doctoral graduates helps assess and strengthen the relevance of the doctoral programme in relation to its objectives and the realities of the labour market.

- C1. The relevance of the doctoral programme is analysed through the quality of doctoral graduates' career trajectories. It is measured using surveys tracking career outcomes and cohort studies.
- C2. The results of these surveys and cohort studies are analysed and disseminated in order to promote the value of the doctorate to prospective students and to professional sectors.

DOMAIN 4: MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

Two standards (13 and 14) specify the scope of this domain. Their purpose is to assess the framework for managing and continuously improving the doctoral programmes delivered by the doctoral school. More specifically, they aim to evaluate their impact on the activities and outcomes of the doctoral programme, as well as how the doctoral school monitors these in relation to its objectives.

Standard 13: The doctoral programme is supported and strengthened by the higher education institution's human resources policy and resource allocation.

- C1. The doctoral supervision policy defined within the doctoral school meets clear and shared criteria.

- C2. The higher education institution's human resources policy, covering recruitment, promotion and recognition of activities, takes into account the needs of the doctoral programme and helps to enhance it.
- C3. Supervisors affiliated with the doctoral school and its support staff benefit from the higher education institution's policy of incentives and support for incoming and outgoing mobility, which contributes to the internationalisation of the doctoral programme.
- C4. The policy for supporting, guiding and training supervisors associated with the doctoral school strengthens the quality of doctoral education and supervision.
- C5. The doctoral programme has financial resources at its disposal, which it monitors and manages in line with its objectives and outcomes.

Standard 14: The doctoral programme is underpinned by a process of internal evaluation and continuous improvement.

- C1. The doctoral school organises the evaluation of the doctoral programme by its doctoral students.
- C2. The doctoral school analyses the results of this evaluation and with the support of its council proposes corrective measures to improve it.

DOMAIN 5: MAJOR DIRECTIONS FOR THE NEXT FIVE-YEAR CONTRACT

Should the doctoral school be considering a major structural change (reorganisation, split, merger, etc.), it shall present the future scientific scope(s) and provide an initial overview of the policy directions for the forthcoming five-year contract, as well as the main developments envisaged during that period.

If these elements have not been presented in the previous sections of the self-evaluation, the doctoral school should specify the strategic directions, objectives and major initiatives planned for the coming years, within its scope and in relation to the activities outlined in the domains above.