



Guidelines for Doctoral Programs in Business and Management

Version EIASM – EDAMBA, September 15th, 2015

Background to this document

The EIASM and EDAMBA have long standing traditions and experiences with doctoral education and raising quality assurance in doctoral programs¹, both PhD and DBA, in Europe and worldwide. The EIASM has organized and hosted a highly successful EDEN doctoral seminar series, among other activities, with hundreds of specialised seminars covering all Management and Business Studies disciplines for the past four decades. The EDEN seminars have brought together thousands of students and faculty from across the world. The EDAMBA has also built a critical mass of more than sixty doctoral programs for the past twenty years, helping raise the quality of these programs through regular meetings and exchanges of program directors, through summer and winter schools for thousands of doctoral students and supervisors, coming from all over Europe and well beyond. The construction of quality doctoral education in Europe and the structuration of a European research area and community of engaged scholars in Management and Business Studies has therefore been at heart of the activities of both organisations for decades now. The more recent work of the EUA (Salzburg principles) and national quality assurance agencies, such as the QAA² (UK) have further highlighted the significance of developing standards and quality assurance in the framework of the

¹ Doctoral degree programs in Management and Business Studies are mainly divided in two categories. The ‘traditional’ PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) is ‘normally’ delivered full time and on site. It requires 3-4 years of study and primarily makes a substantive contribution in terms of theory generation and/or testing. The ‘novel’ DBA (Doctorate of Business Administration) is delivered part time and possibly, at least in part, not *in situ*. It usually requires 4-7 years of study, and targets reflective practitioners and executives, working full time in industry or academia, including management consultants and the like, who aim to become ‘doctorally qualified’ and to make a substantive contribution in terms of their ongoing professional practice.

²<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Chapter-B11-Research-degrees.pdf>

Bologna process for all academic disciplines with a view to enable further the mobility of doctoral students and early career scientists in what has increasingly become an international job market.

This document is an updated version of the European Code of Practice for Doctoral Education that was published in 2014 by EIASM and EDAMBA. This document reflects extensive discussions within and between EIASM and EDAMBA. Over the past five years, additional input has been received through the organization of several workshops that created a space for reflection and exchange.

Doctoral supervisors and Doctoral Program directors from major business schools and business studies departments across Europe have been involved and contributed significantly to those exchanges. In particular, we build here upon intense and animated discussions within the context of the first two EDAMBA-EIASM Consortia on Doctoral Supervision and the New Global Research Landscape in 2012 and 2013. In order to turn the richness of those many discussions into a synthetic document, the EIASM Board and the EDAMBA Executive Committee have appointed a joint Task Force. This Task Force met for the first time in August 2012 and included the following members:

- Professor Marianne Stenius, Hanken, Finland
- Professor Marie-Laure Djelic, ESSEC Business School, France
- Professor Pierre Batteau, IAE, University of Aix en Provence, France
- Professor Hans Siggaard Jensen, Aarhus University, Denmark
- Professor Dimitris Assimakopoulos, Grenoble Management School, France
- Nina Payen, EIASM Programme Coordinator

The original text was written by the joint Task Force and it was validated by the Boards of both EIASM and EDAMBA in 2014. This revised version was produced in early September 2015.

Preamble

After long discussions in the wake of the European Bologna process the European Union through the European University Association has adopted a common understanding of and common policy on doctoral training. This policy was formulated in 2005 through the so-called “Salzburg Principles”³. The three most important principles in this document bore on the definition of doctoral degrees and doctoral education:

1. The core component of doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research,
2. Doctoral candidates are early stage researchers,
3. Supervision and assessment (and their quality) play a crucial role in doctoral training.

Doctoral students are not independent researchers, like Faculty members can be. Nor are they, though, regular degree students. As “early stage researchers”, they should be inscribed in a broader research community and embedded in a setting providing resources, quality supervision and assessment as well as access to international research networks. Building upon the philosophy of the Salzburg Principles and best practices at well-established doctoral programs in business and management, we propose below a set of quality guidelines for doctoral programs in that field.

³ http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/Salzburg_Report_final.1129817011146.pdf

Main components:

- I. Research Environment
- II. Doctoral Objectives
- III. Admission Policy and Criteria
- IV. Doctoral training Program
- V. Supervision and Student Progress
- VI. Doctoral Thesis
- VII. Assessment

I. Research Environment

- A Doctorate invokes training through and for research. As such the existence of a strong research environment is a ‘sine qua non’ condition for the provision of quality doctoral education. Hence, a sufficient number of research active faculty members should be involved in the Doctoral Program
- Candidates ought to be recognized and treated as early stage research professionals from the moment they enter the program and this should be reflected in the facilities provided.
- Ideally, a “supervisory team” should be put in place for each doctoral candidate. The “primary supervisor” should be a research active and committed Faculty member, who has at least supervised to full completion one doctoral candidate and is associated with the area of study of the candidate. If this condition is not met, provisions should be made for the supervisory team to include experienced supervisors, with proven track records in successful doctoral supervision. These experienced supervisors can oversee the process even though their own research expertise may not be in the immediate area of study.

Doctoral candidates should be selected with consideration of existing strengths and specializations amongst research active faculty members. Ideally, all candidates should have a tutor when they enter the program – the tutor does not necessarily have to be the future PhD supervisor.

- In management departments and business schools, a doctoral education of quality implies the production of research and outputs that are highly rigorous and contribute to theoretical debates but are also innovative as well as relevant for policy and practice. These three standards – Rigor, Innovation, Relevance – should be reflected in the research environment, composition and outputs of the Doctoral Program.
- All participants to the Doctoral experience (including candidates and Faculty members) should adhere to an explicit Code of Ethical Conduct. Each program or institution should put in place such a Code in accordance with national quality assurance guidelines and/or professional and disciplinary guidelines.
- The Doctoral Program should have its own governance structure – ideally with a doctoral degree program director(s) and administrator(s). The PhD program director should have sufficient formal authority and control over resources to have an impact on the program.
- The Doctoral Program should have sufficient resources for the proper management and monitoring of doctoral studies. This includes the resources needed for selection and admission process, delivery of course work, library and computing resources, for quality supervision, for monitoring of annual student progress and for assessment of Doctoral theses.

- Doctoral Programs should include or at least allow a period of time in another institution – preferably in another country – and ensure the resources to facilitate this internationalization process.

II. Doctoral Objectives

- The Doctoral qualification corresponds to level 8 in the European Bologna Qualifications Framework.
- A Doctoral program in Management and Business Studies strives to develop candidates, transform them into qualified and responsible early stage researchers who generate and/or test new theory, contribute to policy and practice and are able to function in increasingly international research communities
- Completion of a Doctoral program should open the door to an academic career to those graduates who so desire, and should increasingly be a natural requirement for academically qualified researchers and faculty members.
- Doctoral programs should be associated with a number of explicitly stated learning objectives, such as:
 - o Doctoral candidates should go through the process of Doctoral studies, to master theories and methods at the frontiers of knowledge in a particular discipline or area of concentration;
 - o Doctoral candidates should learn to develop sound research designs so as to use existing theories, acquire new information and develop new theoretical insights to confront practical and theoretical problems with the aim of proposing well-founded solutions;

- o Doctoral candidates should be trained to explore complex problems and to deploy critical thinking;
- o Doctoral candidates should learn to communicate and collaborate with their peers and to function within the context of a wider scholarly community;
- o Doctoral candidates should be prepared to work within an international research context
- When possible, doctoral candidates should gain experience with teaching during the process of their doctoral studies.
- Through the Doctoral experience the doctoral candidate should acquire a number of important competencies concerning the planning and management of research. Such competencies could be acquired by participation in the research work and activity of the institution delivering the doctoral degree.

III. Admission Policy and Criteria

- The process of selection for Doctoral candidates should be open, competitive, fair and transparent. It should be collective, collegial and coordinated at the program level to ensure fair treatment and homogeneity of selection criteria and quality expectations. Faculty members in the research group or environment where the doctoral work is to be done should be involved.
- Individuals selected to enter a Doctoral program should already have at least a Master's degree with distinction (or of equivalent high quality). In the case of integrated Doctoral programs that deliver a master research in the process, outstanding quality candidates from honors' bachelor programs can also be considered.

- Each institution should define clear criteria for inclusion and identify mechanisms to measure in particular the following elements:
 - o Prior academic results and achievements
 - o Quality of the institution delivering prior degrees
 - o Quality and feasibility of the envisioned research project
 - o Adequacy between the profile of the candidate, his/her project and supervisory competences and capacities within the faculty
 - o Language proficiency
- The selection committee should consider the issue of the financing of the Doctoral project and assess existing and potential resources – internal funding, external funding opportunities, opportunities for part-time employment, additional resources for the financing of participation in conferences and doctoral colloquia – to make sure there is a reasonable potential for the successful completion of the Doctorate in due time.

IV. Doctoral Training Program

- Doctoral training should include a mix of course work, original research under supervision and professional development activities.
- All activities within the Doctoral program should mobilize both analytical and synthetic skills and foster critical and methodical thinking. In order to develop the doctoral candidate's academic and scholarly identity and critical thinking, the training should include elements aiming at the acquisition of advanced knowledge, through exploration of the diversity of paradigms and methodologies in the field of research.

- Doctoral programs should be bounded by a time limit – a length equivalent to 3 to 4 years maximum of thesis work seems reasonable (not including course work and not including extensions corresponding to leaves for health, parental or other personal reasons).
- The length of the course work period will vary but it should be sufficient for candidates to acquire, under academic guidance and building on the competencies acquired by earlier academic studies, the theoretical and methodological skills necessary to the development of their research project.
- Doctoral programs should include substantial training in the ethics of research. The format for this training can vary but it should cover all dimensions of the research activity.
- Doctoral candidates should have access to the resources necessary for their research work – hardware equipment, basic and more sophisticated software,
- Procedures should be in place to allow a regular review and updating of the structure and quality of the program. These procedures should involve at least four categories of stakeholders – research students, faculty members, supervisors and doctoral program management.

V. Supervision

- At any point in time, each candidate should have a primary supervisor, officially in charge of monitoring the Doctoral process.
- Each primary supervisor should not take responsibility for supervision beyond a number of students compatible with his/her workload.

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- At least one of the supervisors must be research active in the field where the candidate plans to develop his/her project.
 - The primary supervisor should have experience with doctoral supervision and a track record of successful completions previously to the appointment as primary supervisor. Where this is not possible, the second member of the supervisory team should have the necessary supervisory experience, i.e. at least one successful supervision.
 - Supervisors should be accessible and available on a reasonable and regular basis. The research candidate and supervisor should meet regularly and maintain a rolling progress report with at minimum ten meetings per year when students are full time and five meetings if students are part time. Supervisors should provide timely, effective and constructive feedback on the candidate's work.
 - The institution should have a process allowing for coaching and continuous improvement in doctoral supervision with mentoring of junior faculty by senior professors and supervisory teams allowing staff development through internal or external activities and events organized at national or international institutes and academic communities.
 - Co-supervision or a supervision committee should be possible (including with faculty members from other institutions) and in fact encouraged in a number of situations – if one of the supervisor is a junior member of Faculty; if there is a possibility that one of the supervisor will leave the institution during the process; if the project of the candidate calls for complementary skills and competencies that a single supervisor does not have on his/her own.

- An initial meeting between the candidate and the supervisor(s) might establish the agreed practice for collaboration during the Doctorate project, setting:
 - Frequency of meetings
 - Expected deliveries on both sides (what and when the candidate should deliver, how and when should the supervisor provide feedback)
 - Possible additional training needs including Doctoral workshops
 - A broadly defined (and malleable) project management agenda – a schedule of meetings and arrangements for monitoring research progress on a regular (monthly) basis and at least once per year on a formal basis so that the institution allows student registration for the next year.

- Supervisors have a responsibility to foster the professional development of their research candidates. This would include:
 - Guiding the candidate in his/her early professional development path (targeting conferences, presenting in conferences, entering and managing academic networks, understanding the codes of academia, preparing for the job market....)
 - Opening his/her academic networks to facilitate the development of the candidate (to organize a period of stay in a foreign institution, to build an appropriate Doctorate jury, to help the candidate in his/her job search....)
 - Being attentive to personal difficulties along the way and helping, when possible, with appropriate referrals.

VI. Doctoral Thesis

- The quality of the Doctoral thesis must be the basis for evaluating whether the candidate should be granted the Doctoral degree. Granting the Doctoral degree entails that the Doctoral candidate has been judged capable of carrying independent, original and scientifically sound research and able to mobilize critical thinking to evaluate the work of others but also his/her own work in light of the work of others.
- The format of the Doctoral thesis can vary – research monograph or a body of research papers, published or publishable in internationally recognized, peer-reviewed journals. In case the thesis consists of papers it should include a summary presenting the main findings and results and the research context of the papers.
- The benchmark is the same in both cases – the outcome expected from a period of three to four years full time research.
- All Doctoral theses must include a relevant and up-to-date review of the literature concerning the themes and questions treated, a clearly expressed presentation of the research objectives, an in-depth presentation of the research design and methodology selected, main results, discussion and conclusions, including implications for theory and practice, as well as a short presentation of further issues and challenges emerging from the thesis.

VII. Assessment

- Assessment of a Doctoral thesis will include both the examination of the written thesis and an oral defense, “viva voce”, that may follow an ‘open door’ format (characteristic of most European countries), or a ‘closed door’ format (like in the UK).
- The institution will award the Doctoral degree on the basis of a formal recommendation by a Thesis Committee. This Committee judges both the written thesis and the oral defense and gives its recommendation with respect to the standards presented below and the outcome of the examination process (some institutions have pre-defined outcomes ranging from excellent, to pass with minor modifications, to pass with major modifications, to fail to obtain a Doctorate).
- The Thesis Committee should consist of two to four examiners scientifically qualified, with an experience in examining Doctoral degrees, and research active members with significant expertise in the field explored by the candidate but with no conflicts of interest. At least one member of that Jury should be external (from another institution), independent from the thesis process and with no conflict of interest. External examiners should submit before the viva voce independent and confidential evaluation reports and after the viva a joint report that should be shared with the student and all interested parties.
- The appointment and composition of all Committees should take place in an open and transparent manner. All necessary traces of that process should be kept by the administration of the Doctoral Program for future reference and quality assurance purposes.
- Preferably, the oral defense should be ‘open’ to the public.

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- The thesis should be evaluated based on the following criteria:
 - Theoretical foundation (based on a relevant literature review)
 - Rigorous research (publishable in internationally recognized, peer-reviewed journals)
 - Empirical testing (based on rigorous methodological work)
 - Implication for theory (innovative contribution to theory development)
 - Implication for practice (relevant contribution to the improvement of business and society).
 - Readability of the manuscript and quality of the oral presentation.