



CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Approval date: January 2025.

1. Subject matter and scope

The purpose of this document is to comply with the obligations contained in Art. 9.8 of R.D. 99/2011, which states that "all members of a Doctoral School must sign their commitment to comply with the code of good practice adopted by the School". This complements the general regulations in force governing doctoral studies and the specific regulations of the University of Navarra, namely the "*Regulations on the Organisation of Doctoral Studies*" of 3 July 2024, and like the former, it is applicable to all the University's doctoral programmes.

This Code of Good Practice for the preparation and supervision of doctoral theses contains a set of recommendations and commitments which aim to improve the quality of scientific research, compliance with ethical principles, the training of doctoral students in social and behavioural skills and the resolution of conflicts that may arise during the process of preparing theses. It pertains to all parties involved in the process of designing, preparing, supervising, and defending doctoral theses and therefore includes doctoral students, supervisors, tutors, and coordinators of doctoral programmes, as well as administrative and service staff.

The *Documentary commitment to supervise the doctoral student*, which is signed by the student, the supervisor, the tutor, and the coordinator of the corresponding doctoral academic committee, includes the commitment to follow this Code of Good Practice.

2. Supervision of doctoral students.

Doctoral programmes must have an organisational structure which clearly defines responsibilities and communication mechanisms between doctoral students and their supervisors and tutors, as well as the members of the academic committee.

The supervisor is the main academic contact for the doctoral student and bears the highest academic responsibility. The supervisor is responsible for initiating communications with the doctoral student and ensuring smooth coordination between all those involved in the development of the research work (student, supervisor and, where appropriate, co-supervisor and/or tutor).

By default, the duties of the tutor will be carried out by one of the supervisors, namely the one who fulfils the requirements established in the legislation and has the most experience in thesis supervision.

The relationship between supervisors (supervisors/tutors) and the trainee researcher should be well-organised and regular. This means having fixed timetables and objectives, delivering



research progress updates, and creating opportunities for feedback, both privately (with the doctoral student) and publicly (e.g. seminars).

Supervisors are responsible for assessing whether the work carried out by the doctoral student meets the annual requirements and must communicate any concerns or irregularities to the academic committee of the doctoral programme as soon as they are detected. Lastly, they are responsible for assessing whether the final work meets the requirements of a doctoral thesis before it is submitted for defence.

Supervisors should create a constructive and positive relationship with the trainee researcher in order to successfully convey their knowledge and facilitate the development of the doctoral student's research work. In addition, supervisors must ensure that the doctoral students acquire other essential skills during their training which will enable them to develop their professional career, within or outside academia once the doctoral programme has been completed.

Supervisors are also responsible for continuously improving their supervisory skills.

3. Recommendations for the thesis supervisor

The thesis supervisor is the person ultimately responsible for leading all the research tasks of the doctoral student towards successfully obtaining the doctoral degree. In order to help them perform this function correctly, the following recommendations are made:

- Introduce doctoral students to the university world, (1) by involving them in the work being carried out by the research group and, eventually, in the teaching work of the department; (2) by putting them in contact with other researchers in their area.
- Ensure a stimulating and inclusive professional environment for the doctoral student, taking into account any personal issues that may have an impact on the working environment.
- Assist and guide the doctoral student in the research plan: the design, planning and development of fieldwork and the preparation of the PhD thesis, by means of regular personal interaction.
- Ensure constant supervision of the doctoral students' work, including multiple occasions for the student to discuss and contrast the approach, development, and results with other researchers.
- Advise and guide the doctoral student towards meeting objectives within the established deadlines, focusing their activity on tasks which will ensure progress in preparing the doctoral thesis.
- Promote coordination with the co-supervisor and/or tutor, if applicable.
- Design, together with the co-supervisor, tutor and doctoral student, the doctoral training plan which must include both scientific and technical-instrumental training and horizontal competences (language skills, good practices, intellectual property, and commercialisation of results, etc.).



- Provide systematic and prompt feedback to the doctoral student on progress (texts, reports, etc.). As a guideline, twenty days is considered a reasonable time for providing feedback.
- Ensure compliance with doctoral regulations. This includes: (1) regularly reviewing the doctoral student's activities document; (2) diligently and realistically drafting an annual evaluation report, reflecting difficulties and possible solutions (especially if it is 'unfavourable') with sufficient speed to make any necessary corrections or modifications and to prevent the defencelessness of the doctoral student; (3) completing and signing the administrative documentation that the doctoral student requires for procedures related to the doctoral thesis development.
- Ensure compliance with all the regulations affecting the thesis-related research (in the fields of health and the environment, use of animals, experimentation on and with human beings, etc.).
- Promote the geographical mobility of doctoral students (research stays).
- Guide doctoral students in the dissemination of their results, (1) encouraging them to participate in conferences where they can present them and broaden their contacts; (2) helping them to prepare their contributions to conferences, forums, etc; (3) indicating the channels for publication and helping them in this task.
- Encourage students to think critically about their work.
- Create a research environment characterised by respect for fundamental ethical principles (e.g. proper data management, responsible authorship, avoidance of conflicts of interest), providing clear guidance on honest conduct in science.
- Guarantee the participation of doctoral students in possible publications, benefits and recognition deriving from the use of their doctoral research results.
- Limit the number of theses supervised by each supervisor, according to their supervisory capacity and time available.

4. Recommendations for the thesis tutor

The thesis tutor is responsible for ensuring that the student's training and research are in line with the principles of the doctoral programme and the Doctoral School. The following recommendations are made to support tutors in this effort:

- Oversee the training process of the doctoral student with regards tasks involved in both the doctoral thesis and the training activities.
- Ensure that the resources, facilities, and procedures are adequate for the training of the doctoral student during the completion of the doctoral thesis.
- Facilitate the relationship between the doctoral student and the supervisor in order to guarantee the proper progress of the PhD thesis and avoid possible conflicts.
- Ensure compliance with the doctoral regulations. This includes: (1) regularly reviewing the doctoral student's activities document; (2) diligently completing the annual assessment report (especially if it is 'unfavourable'), in order to make any necessary corrections and modifications and prevent the defencelessness of the doctoral student; (3) to complete and sign the administrative documentation required by the doctoral student for procedures related to the doctoral thesis development.



- Promote the values inherent to good research such as ethical principles, social responsibility, lifelong learning, professionalism, accountability, transparency of research and publication of results.
- Promote the participation of doctoral students in the representative bodies of the University of Navarra under the terms established in the regulations.

5. Recommendations for pre-doctoral researchers.

The main duty of a doctoral candidate is to acquire the skills necessary in order to successfully carry out research work leading to the award of a doctoral degree. Candidates must also take responsibility for honing their skills and meeting commitments related to research funding, where appropriate. The following recommendations are made to ensure good progress:

- Work together with the thesis supervisors and tutor to design the doctoral training plan to be followed in order to obtain the PhD degree, including both scientific and technical-instrumental training and horizontal competences (language skills, good practices, intellectual property, and commercialisation of results, etc.).
- Together with the thesis supervisors and tutor, draw up the research plan to be followed in order to obtain the doctoral degree, detailing the milestones to be reached during the expected duration of the doctoral thesis.
- Take the initiative and make an effort to carry out good research work, which implies: (1) participating actively in the design and planning of the research; (2) taking responsibility for the different activities to be carried out (methodology, field work, analysis and interpretation of results, writing the text of the thesis and publications related to it); (3) reflecting critically on the research process; (4) carrying out any training activities that may have been established, when appropriate, in the specific plans for the doctoral programme; (5) participating actively in seminars, workshops, conferences and other activities designed for doctoral training.
- Work full-time or part-time to complete the doctoral thesis in accordance with a working timetable agreed with the supervisor and adapted to their working environment.
- Maintain fluent communication with the thesis supervisors and tutor, based on mutual respect and trust, (1) reporting regularly and truthfully on the progress of the research and the results obtained, (2) consulting any academic aspects that may interfere with the correct development of the thesis and (3) maintaining an open attitude to the indications and corrections received regarding the research work.
- Comply diligently with established deadlines, both in the evaluation of the research activity carried out each academic year (activities document or RAD, preparation of self-report) and in the administrative processing of other matters (annual enrolment in the doctoral programme, procedures related to thesis funding, etc.).
- Take advantage of the opportunities offered by the supervisors and, eventually, the research group in which the thesis work is framed, by participating in networks and, when possible, creating new ones (e.g. by participating in conferences, carrying out research stays in other centres, etc.).
- Know and comply with generally accepted standards of honest scientific conduct and contribute to the team with an open and collaborative attitude.



- Know and comply with the principles for the correct collection and management of data as per the law, as well as the principle of confidentiality.
- Explain, if applicable, the use of generative artificial intelligence as a supporting tool at any stage in the development of the thesis. The use of generative AI must comply with ethical and legal standards: the thesis work must be original in all its phases. Misuse of AI could be considered as fraud.
- Make proper use of the facilities and equipment made available for the purpose of carrying out the research activity.
- Participate, if appropriate, in the representative bodies of the University of Navarra under the terms established in the regulations.

6. Recommendations for other players involved in doctoral training.

There are other players involved in doctoral training such as the departments where doctoral programmes exist, the Doctoral School, administrative services, and research support services. The following recommendations are made for them:

- Facilitate the integration of doctoral students in the University of Navarra, their doctoral programme, and the department where their doctoral thesis will be carried out.
- Advise doctoral students regarding the administrative tasks necessary for the development of their training programme.
- Collaborate diligently in the development of their doctoral thesis, providing means and resources (computer services, access to the library and its resources, etc.).
- Promote cordial relations based on respect and the principle of collaboration, in a fluent manner, between all the players involved in pre-doctoral training.

7. Conflict resolution

As in any other human relationship, difficulties, disagreements, or conflicts may arise between the doctoral student and the supervisors in the process of completing the thesis. This code sets out strategies for their effective resolution. Conciliation, mediation, and arbitration will guide the actions of the bodies involved in the process, always within the framework of the applicable regulations.

In the event of a conflict between the doctoral student and the supervisors, including a change in the direction of the thesis, this should be communicated as soon as possible, so that it can be addressed, and an agreement may be reached which will allow the activity to continue properly. The first interlocutor will be the tutor, who will gather the information necessary in order to understand the situation and will act as a mediator between the two parties, agreeing on an amicable solution whenever possible. This solution will entail a plan for monitoring the measures adopted and a timetable for said measures, in order to prevent the same conflict from occurring again in the future.

If the tutor and the thesis supervisor are the same person or if the tutor's mediation efforts prove unsuccessful, the conflict or situation must be reported to the academic committee of the doctoral programme. If the supervisors or the tutor are also members of the academic



committee, they must stand aside so that they are not involved in the resolution of the conflict. The coordinator will be responsible for collecting the necessary data or reports and providing them to the rest of the committee in order to propose a joint solution. As before, the proposed solution must include measures and a scheduled follow-up plan. All the documentation deriving from the process (e-mails, annual assessment reports of the doctoral student endorsed by the supervisor/s, applications submitted by the doctoral student, complete solution agreement signed by all parties) will be kept by the coordinator of the doctoral programme.

If the academic committee of the doctoral programme does not find a solution, the proposed solution is not accepted by both parties or the agreed solution has been breached and/or the conflict is renewed, the conflict must be reported to the steering committee of the School for Doctoral Studies. This committee will: (1) analyse the case on the basis of the documentation collected by the coordinator; (2) hold interviews with the supervisors and the Doctoral student in order to gain a deeper understanding of the problem; (3) define a strategy for resolving the conflict, using the measures deemed appropriate; (4) inform the parties concerned of the strategy, which must take into account the state of progress of the doctoral thesis. The committee will act as expeditiously as possible and within a maximum of 20 working days in order to limit any damage to the parties concerned.

The measures proposed by the steering committee of the Doctoral School shall be binding on both parties.