

Code of Practice

Ph.D. Programme of International Relations

How to complete doctoral studies and not to ruin the relationship with your supervisor.

How to guide the doctoral student up to successful defence of the dissertation and to build a potential for a long-term collegial relationship.

The relation between the supervisor and the doctoral student as two experts in the field is in essence asymmetrical. The student accepts the position in which her/his studies and research will be for four years substantially dependent on the evaluation by her/his supervisor. In return s/he gets access to regular contact with an experienced colleague whose guidance allows the student to handle the challenges of – most probably – the first independent research project from research design formation, through all stages of its implementation, publication of its results up until the defence of the dissertation thesis. During that time, the student voluntarily undertakes to respect the regime of the department, to protect its research programme, and to join the activities that contribute to its research and pedagogical profile. These may be incorporated as a part of her/his individual study plan (e.g., participation in teaching and grading in undergraduate study programmes, in supervising and grading of bachelor and master theses, etc.). Next to the guidance of the activities directly related to the implementation of the dissertation project, s/he may expect from the supervisor continuous support in the broader socialization in the discipline and academic environment as well as in training in pertinent skills (grant applications, participation in academic conferences, publication strategy, joining relevant academic networks etc.). A working relation between the supervisor and the student presumes not only mutual respect and collegiality but also a reciprocal loyalty and trust which nevertheless cannot hinder on the supervisor's side her/his ability to evaluate the student's progress fairly. To get there, the following principles and rules, which help to form the environment where quality research and teaching can flourish and all those participating receive credit for their contribution, need to be pursued. Observing the regulations of the University, especially the [Code of Ethics](#), is taken for granted.

1. General responsibilities of the doctoral student and the supervisor

a) doctoral student

Doctoral student is responsible for:

Research

Fulfilling the requirements of her/his degree programme including any requirements for annual progression review as part of the Individual Study Plan (ISP).

Taking advantage of the facilities and supervision offered by the University.

Working as a professional, independent researcher accountable for the development of her/his own research.

Maintaining ethical standards in the design, conduct and reporting of research.

Working diligently and effectively throughout her/his studies.

Maintaining records of research in a state which can be investigated and understood by anyone with a legitimate right to enquire.¹

Dissertation

Submitting a dissertation representing the student's research and findings. The programme Handbook will give details on what is expected to be submitted for pre-defence and defence.

Submitting written work to agreed deadlines to allow sufficient time for comments and discussion.

Producing, on time, a dissertation that meets the criteria set out in the regulations governing the doctoral studies (see Handbook).

Taking full responsibility for the quality of the dissertation submitted for assessment (while the supervisors may advise on whether they think work is ready for submission, their opinion carries no guarantee of success in the assessment).

Supervision

Making themselves available at times agreed and maintaining regular contact with their supervisors.

Producing a record of each key supervision meeting and forwarding it to their supervisor for agreement.

¹ Supervisor, principal investigator of the research project, Head of the Department, Chair of the Board.

Informing the supervisor about any employment(s) that may affect the course and successful completion of her/his studies.

Consulting in confidence with the Chair of the Board if s/he feels that a change of Supervisor is for any reason desirable.

Training

Participating in any training that is a required part of the programme.

Taking advantage of available research skills training.

Reflecting on their broader transferable skills and professional development and engaging with appropriate training opportunities.

Resolving problems

Actively seeking advice and help from the sources identified in this Code if problems arise.

Notifying, without delay, their Supervisor, or the Chair of the Board, of any special circumstances affecting their studies or assessment.

b) supervisor

The supervisor is responsible for:

Being aware and respecting the administrative requirements of supervision and the status of the student.

Ensuring appropriate approval for any co-supervision arrangements is obtained from the Board, if needed.

Ensuring the student's progress is reviewed for each year of study.

Providing advice on academic matters.

Ensuring the student's intellectual property is respected.

In case of co-supervision, ensuring the student is aware of the responsibilities of individual supervisory team members. Communication with the co-supervisor (konzultant/cotutelle).

Advising the student on research ethics and integrity, including the procedures of obtaining ethical approval, if needed.

Advising the student on facilities required for the research and supporting the student in accessing these.

Advising the student on how to prepare for annual progression review, for the pre-defence and for the defence.

Agreeing to the frequency of supervision meetings and the means of keeping record of the meetings.

Organising regular meetings to discuss all matters relating to the student's research, including feedback on written work.

Advising on the student's professional development needs throughout the student's studies if asked to do so.

Encouraging the student to develop transferable skills and to attend appropriate training courses where possible.

Encouraging the student to become an active member of the research community, for example by advising on attendance at relevant conferences and supporting the student in seeking funding for such events.

2. Research ethics

a) integrity of research, integrity of researcher

The key principles of good research practice are reliability (quality of research design, methodology, analysis, and data), honesty (in developing, undertaking, reviewing, reporting, and communicating research), respect (for research participants, colleagues, academic community, society), and accountability (for the research from idea to publication, for its possible impacts).

The student is obliged to familiarize her/himself with the key principles of integrity of research and their implementation in the field of her/his studies. The role of supervisor is to discuss any issues or questions that may arise, eventually navigate her/him to relevant sources of information.

The major misdemeanours representing the research misconduct are **fabrication** (making up results and presenting them as real), **falsification** (manipulating data or research processes), and **plagiarism** (using other people's work without giving it proper credit). For a more detailed and apt list of examples of academic misconduct as unacceptable practice check the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#).

b) ethical principles pertinent for specific research methods

Various methods used in social sciences carry different possible ethical hazards. The student is responsible for getting acquainted with them and should follow the recommendations of good practice appropriate for her/his type of research. The supervisor should draw the student's attention to the issue in case s/he is not aware of it or disregards it and to advice on seeking the approval of the research ethics committee if needed.

3. PhD student-supervisor relationship

Respect, trust, confidence, and fairness are essential elements of the student-supervisor relationship. Both parties should contribute to the relationship responsibly and professionally by being considerate, punctual, and honest. The supervisor must use discretion when handling personal information about the doctoral student. Dual relationship (personal/intimate, business-type, incl. superior-subordinate at other institution) between the supervisor and student is unacceptable and must result in change of supervisor. Main responsibility for solving the problem when/if it happens lies with the supervisor.

a) communication and records (log)

The pattern of communication is established at the beginning of studies by mutual consent and should be followed through. Frequency of supervisory meetings may be adjusted depending on the phase of the dissertation research and its needs.

Keeping record of supervisory meetings helps the student and supervisor to keep track of actions and decisions. Therefore, students must provide their Supervisor with a written note after each session including:

- the date and purpose of the meeting;
- topics discussed;
- tasks and dates assigned;
- any problems identified.

All approved logs will be archived by the Supervisor.

b) supervisor's role in dissertation's research design formation

The doctoral dissertation should demonstrate the student's ability to contribute to the field by original, self-standing piece of rigorous academic work. As such, it should bear the original idea, the research puzzle and analysis of the student. The supervisor's role is mainly to be reflective and stimulating as well as cautionary to provide the right impulses at the right moments of the implementation of the dissertation project.

c) transparency of the annual progress review process

The student is obliged to record the content of the supervisory sessions and to send it to the supervisor for approval after each meeting. The list of dates and types of the meetings is a mandatory part of the regular report on progress submitted by the student at the end of each semester.

The Board may request more detailed information from the log in case the progress on dissertation shows serious deficiencies upon the annual/extraordinary review.

d) co-authorship of publications

In case of co-publication by the doctoral student and the supervisor within a joint research project, the principles and specific parameters of co-authorship, including the order of authors, should be established at an early stage of the research process. The shares should be established well before the bibliographic information is entered into OBD. Both the agreements on principles of co-authorship and shares should be recorded in the log.

e) socialization in research community vs loyalty to the supervisor

One of the key responsibilities of the supervisor is to allow the student to enter the academic community in the pertinent research area (presenting at conferences, invitation to projects, invitation to joint publications, organization of academic events etc.) and develop her/his own academic status within. In return, the supervisor may have a legitimate expectation of student's loyalty both at academic and personal level.

f) conflict resolution

If for any reason a conflict emerges between the student and the supervisor, they both should seek its early resolution, preferably by their own means or/and with assistance of the Chair of the Board. Irreconcilable conflict may result in change of the supervisor which has to be approved by the Board.

Any unresolved conflict or complaint from the student or the supervisor should be reported to the Chair without delay, no later than three months after the parties have communicated to deal with the issue for the last time.

4. Ethical aspects of research department operation, namely

a) protection of the research programme

By admission to studies the doctoral student becomes part of the team of the Department of the supervisor. Even though s/he is not an employee, s/he is supposed to behave in an analogous manner, i.e., to respect and if needed to support the objectives of the team, to follow the rules and practice of implementation of the research programme, (of which her/his dissertation research is often a part), its holder, and protect its reputation.

From the Department's perspective the doctoral student's position represents a significant part of its capacities, both the supervisory capacity as well as other Department's resources, therefore there is a legitimate expectation that the student should contribute to the common effort. Thus, all student's publications, which resulted from the dissertation research project, including the text of dissertation, if published after defence, must be dedicated to the Department.²

² For a detailed description of how to proceed with publications co-dedicated to other institutions/departments, see the Handbook.

b) respect to colleagues, giving credit for their contribution to the research programme/department

Being a member of the team means to respect other members of the team as colleagues and to give them credit for their role and contribution. By doing so the student has the right to expect the same respect from the others, including the recognition of her/his authorship of the pertinent parts of the project.

5. Ethical dimension of researcher's behaviour in academic community at large

By entering the doctoral studies, the student becomes a member of the global academic community. Even though s/he is formally still a student, and s/he may need support occasionally during the formative period from the supervisor or the Department, her/his role and responsibilities are completely grown-up.

The society supports scientific research with legitimate expectation to receive, in return, credible scientific findings that serve broad scope of purposes. Therefore, to be a scientist, and especially a researcher in academia, means you accept that role of service to society. Being part of the academic community brings privileges – namely the freedom of scientific research and the thrill of exploring new directions of research – but more importantly, it brings responsibility and obligation. To respect the world of science in general, to be aware of the ethical dimension of research across various disciplines, and not to use the knowledge and authority that comes with high levels of qualification in a way that may, for extra-scientific reasons, undermine the regard or reputation of work of science neither in yours nor other disciplines.

Be aware that our graduates upon receiving the diploma take an oath, promising:

"...studia humanitatis impigro labore culturos et provectoros non sordidi lucri causa nec ad vanam captandam gloriam, sed ut veritas propagetur et lux eius, qua salus humani generis continetur, clarius effulgeat."

"... you will pursue social studies with tireless effort, not for mean profit, neither for vain glory, but for the truth to be propagated and its light, on which the well-being of the humankind rests, to shine brighter still."

Sources and inspiration:

[Code of Ethics](#). Charles University, December 2018

Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students. University of Edinburgh, August 2020

[Doctoral School Handbook 2020/2021: The Art of Research](#). University College London

Ethics in Social Science and Humanities. European Commission, October 2018

[Etický rámec výzkumu. RVV ČR, 2005](#)

[Graduate Research Degrees: Code of Practice 2020/21](#). University College London

Halse, Christine Halse & Peter Bansel (2012) The learning alliance: ethics in doctoral supervision, *Oxford Review of Education*, 38:4, 377-392, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2012.706219>

Lee, Anne Lee (2008) How are doctoral students supervised? Concepts of doctoral research supervision, *Studies in Higher Education*, 33:3, 267-281, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070802049202>

Mahmud, Saadia & Tracey Bretag (2013) Postgraduate research students and academic integrity: 'It's about good research training', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 35:4, 432-443, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2013.812178>

[Morálně etické aspekty výzkumu a vývoje](#). RVVaV, červen 1999

Mutual ethical guidelines for the relationship between supervisors and doctoral students at LTH. University of Lund, Faculty of Engineering, October 2015

On being a scientist : a guide to responsible conduct in research. Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy, National Academy of Science, National Academy of Engineering, and Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. Third Edition. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/12192>

Research Ethics Policy and Procedures. London School of Economics and Political Science, September 2020

The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. Revised Edition. ALLEA, Berlin, 2017

Approved by the Board of the Ph.D. Programme of International Relations, May 2021