A European Code of Practice for Doctoral Studies in Management and Business

EIASM / EDAMBA Task Force - Work in progress
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Background to this document

The EIASM and EDAMBA have long standing traditions and experiences with doctoral education and raising quality assurance in doctoral programs, both PhD and DBA, in Europe and worldwide.[1] 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. EDAMBA has 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 among program directors and 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 organizations for decades now. The more recent work of the European University Association-EUA (Salzburg principles) and national quality assurance agencies, such as the QAA[2] (UK) have further highlighted the significance of developing standards and quality assurance in the framework of the Bologna process for all academic disciplines. The ultimate objective is to enable and facilitate the employability and mobility of doctoral candidates and early career scientists in what has increasingly become an international job market.

This document reflects extensive discussions and joint work 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.

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[1] Doctoral degree programs in Management and Business Studies are mainly divided in two categories. The PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) is generally 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 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 in industry or academia, 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

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 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 Pierre Batteau, IAE, Aix Marseille University, France
- Professor Hans Siggaard Jensen, Aarhus University, Denmark
- Professor Dimitris Assimakopoulos, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France
- Professor Marie-Laure Djelic, ESSEC Business School, France
- Nina Payen, EIASM Programme Coordinator

This text has been written by the joint Task Force and is being validated by the boards of both EIASM and EDAMBA

Preamble

Quality assurance is becoming of increasing importance in the management of research and higher education. While the Doctorate used to be a degree highly connected to the specificities of a national system for higher education, it is now becoming a diploma (and in some cases even a commodity) with international value and relevance for Universities and Business Schools across the globe. Markets, careers and research collaborations for Doctoral graduates are all increasingly international. This generates competitive pressures amongst Doctoral programs for attracting the best candidates and an urgent necessity to develop tools for quality assessment and improvement.

The main purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for quality practice and assurance in Doctoral education. As such, this document should be appreciated not as setting standards for ranking and the building of hierarchies but as proposing a toolbox for institutional and quality program development[3]. Quality improvement of Doctoral programs can definitely enhance the research profile and reputation of any business school or university department. It is also a means of strengthening career opportunities for Doctoral graduates.

Europe has a long tradition in Doctoral education, with a great deal of diversity across national systems. As a European area for research and higher education has been taking shape over the last decades encouraged by the creation of both the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area, it is important to think about the conditions for compatibility and mobility across systems.

As both EIASM and EDAMBA are profoundly convinced of the benefits of diversity, we have tried to combine in these guidelines a respect for institutional and hence program diversity while pursuing common guidelines along seven key dimensions (see table below). It is the intention that this document could be used as a reference and a blueprint in European institutions as well as in institutions in other parts of the world to enhance the quality of Doctoral programs in Management and Business Studies.

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[3] The term "program" is used here to refer to the entire process associated with a doctoral student experience – including course work and Doctoral level registration, supervision and the research project including the writing up of a Doctoral level thesis, additional activities, such as research or/and teaching assistantship, time spent abroad and development of research networks for sustaining scholarship and reflective practice, up to the oral defense of the Doctoral thesis.

**Table: Building a Code of Practice for Doctoral Education:
Seven key dimensions for program development**

Research Environment
Doctoral Objectives
Admission Policy and Criteria
Doctoral Training Program
Supervision & Student Progress
Doctoral Thesis
Assessment

I.   Research Environment

Basic standard

- 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. The current trend is towards the creation of Doctoral Schools (DS) with a critical mass of resources sufficient to sustain a doctoral education of high quality. A sufficient number of research active faculty members should support such a DS providing the opportunity for doctoral candidates to socialize within an academic community of engaged scholars.

- 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 should be reflected in the research environment, composition and outputs of the Doctoral School.

- Doctoral candidates should have access, throughout their doctoral program, to research active faculty members in their individual area of interest, and a 'supervisory team' should ideally be put in place for supporting each and every candidate throughout her/his studies.

- Supervision should be done by at least one qualified 'primary supervisor', a research active and committed faculty member, who has at least supervised to successful completion one doctoral candidate. If this basic criterion is not met, then provision should be made for the supervisory team to include experienced supervisors with proven track record 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 – in integrated PhD programs (that include a Master Research period) the tutor does not necessarily have to be the future PhD supervisor.

- Candidates ought to be recognized and treated as early stage research professionals from the moment they enter the program.

- The facilities provided to doctoral candidates should be compatible with the quality assurance requirements for a Doctoral Thesis as outlined in this

document.

- All participants to the Doctoral experience (including candidates and Faculty members) should adhere to an explicit Code of Ethical Conduct for postgraduate research candidates and supervisors. 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 DS should have its own governance structure – ideally with a PhD or/and DBA degree program director(s) and administrator(s). The PhD/DBA program director should have sufficient formal authority and control over resources to have an impact on the program.

- The DS 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.

Quality development
- Institutions lacking the resources to create on their own a conducive research environment or/and DS should only grant the Doctoral degree if they deploy collaborative strategies with other institutions that fulfill this requirement. Such an institution may want to explore the possibility for collaborative double or joint programs or degrees[4].

- Measurement of the strength of the research environment should use a mix of quantitative analytics and more qualitative and substantive assessments of research conducted in the particular institution – with respect to both quality and impact.

- When confronted with a lack of qualified supervisory capacity, an institution should consider various forms of collaborative provision, co-supervision and creation of appropriate supervisory teams adhering to a commonly agreed and explicit Code of Practice.

- Quality Doctoral programs should include or at least allow a period of time in another institution – preferably in another country. This would stimulate early

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[4] Collaborative degrees range from joint degrees (a Doctoral degree is delivered jointly by two institutions on the basis of a joint program), to double degrees (two degrees delivered in parallel by two collaborating institutions), to more flexible "cotutelle" agreements (including joint supervision across two institutions)

on career internationalization while enhancing access to resources and facilities necessary to the successful completion of a Doctorate. The doctoral program should develop the resources to facilitate this internationalization process − development of international networks, collaboration and provision of specific funding.

- In parallel, quality doctoral programs should also have procedures in place enabling fruitful mobility periods for incoming doctoral candidates on leave from other programs. These include procedures for a smooth integration in the local research environment − possibility to attend courses, seminars and workshops, access to infrastructure and resources, including local supervision and mentoring.

- Most professional associations in Business and Management Studies have developed a Code of Ethical Conduct for research. For an example, see *Appendix 1 − Code of Conduct: Association for Information Systems.* Institutions can decide to use those diverse Codes − each applying to a different discipline or concentration. An institution could also decide to produce its **own Code of Ethical Conduct** that would apply equally across all disciplines or concentrations so that when issues arise there are common rules, procedures and standards in place for dealing with key issues such as student progress, supervision, possible conflicts and complaints.

II. Doctoral Objectives

Basic standard
- A Doctoral program, leading to a PhD or DBA degree in Management and Business Studies, strives to develop candidates, transform them into qualified and responsible early stage researchers able to function in increasingly international research communities that generate and/or test new theory and contribute to useful policy and practice.

- The Doctoral qualification corresponds to level 8 in the European Bologna Qualifications Framework.

    o 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:

- 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;
- 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.
- Doctoral candidates should be trained to explore complex problems and to deploy critical thinking.
- Doctoral candidates should learn to communicate and collaborate with their peers and to function within the context of a wider scholarly community.
- 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.

Quality Development

- A qualified researcher is somebody who is committed to develop original research, in a responsible and independent manner, within the constraints of scholarly integrity (as defined by the different disciplines and scholarly communities).

- Beyond academic careers and opportunities, a Doctoral degree should also prepare individuals adequately to the challenges of research based careers in international organizations, public or private research institutions, banks and consulting firms or other private companies.

- To help with the professionalization and career preparation of doctoral students, the Doctoral program should include professional career development initiatives and opportunities, where it is judged appropriate. Of particular importance to those who aspire to academic careers is early exposure to the journal publication process.

- Doctoral candidates should have experience with communication on the quality and relevance of their research to a non-scholarly community.

- 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

Basic standard
- The process of selection for Doctoral candidates should be open, competitive, fair and transparent.

- 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:
  - Prior academic results and achievements
  - Quality of the institution delivering prior degrees
  - Quality and feasibility of the envisioned research project
  - Adequacy between the profile of the candidate, his/her project and supervisory competences and capacities within the faculty
  - 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.

Quality development
- It is important to assess both the motivation and the potential of applicants for doctoral research – and not only their past academic performance. Assessing this could require a personal interview with the applicant – whether in a physical setting or through technological means.

- Faculty members in the research group or environment where the doctoral work is to be done should be involved in the selection process. The process of selection should be collective, collegial and coordinated at the program level to ensure fair treatment and homogeneity of selection criteria and quality expectations.

- When the candidate has to finance him/herself partly or fully, the institution should make sure that he/she still has the time needed to complete the program and that there is no conflict of interest.

IV.   Doctoral Training Program

Basic standard

- 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, library and database access, and they should as far as possible have a working space in the institution.

- As far as possible, the Doctoral program should allow for candidates to spend some time in another institution, preferably abroad. As far as possible, the experiences should be individually tailored and fitted to the particular needs and projects of each candidate.

- The Doctoral program should allow for regular assessment of the progress of Doctoral students.

- Procedures should also 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.

Quality development
- All courses do not have to be delivered within a given institution. Candidates should be able to validate quality courses taken elsewhere. Doctoral programs can also collaborate in different ways to offer jointly a range of quality courses that each one could not offer on its own.

- Doctoral candidates should have access to confidential help – whether it be with respect to issues concerning the Doctoral process and/or personal matters.

- Doctoral candidates should be able to select their representatives. Doctoral candidate representatives should work with the leadership of the Doctoral program or graduate school on issues such as the design, management, evaluation or development of the program.

- The initiative and involvement of Doctoral candidates in the development of the program and in the enhancement of a research community within and around the program should be fostered and encouraged.

V. Supervision

Basic standard
- 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. There is no absolute limit here but it appears that 5 to 7 full-time students per senior professor (in a pattern where the supervisor is a single supervisor) would be a good maximum target.

- 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 of

primary supervisor. Where this is not possible, the second member of the supervisory team should have the necessary supervisory experience, ie. 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 of full time study or five meetings per year of part time study.

- 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.

- As the candidate-supervisor interaction is key to the successful completion of a Doctoral process, both research candidates and supervisors should respect each other – generally keep to appointments, except in exceptional circumstances, be on time, respect deadlines for sending material or feedback, plan and agree upon common rules and respective responsibilities, and be constructively critical. At the beginning of the process, candidate and supervisor(s) should agree on the basic rules and norms structuring their relationship and collaboration.

Quality development
- 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:
  o Frequency of meetings
  o Expected deliveries on both sides (what and when the candidate should deliver, how and when should the supervisor provide feedback)
  o Possible additional training needs including Doctoral workshops
  o 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.

- The research candidate and supervisor could, if they find this useful, jointly maintain a written *research log*[5], which documents details of joint meetings, agreements reached (such as meeting dates and preparation required for each meeting), goals (such as submission dates for joint papers and completion of dissertation chapters), progress commentaries made by the supervisor which suggest areas for improvement and ways to help the candidate achieve this improvement, and so on.

- Supervisors should provide timely, constructive and effective feedback on the candidate's work.

- 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.

- Institutions should consider having contractual Codes of Supervision that could be signed by the supervisor, the research candidate and the head of the DS or equivalent program administrator.

VI. Doctoral Thesis

Basic standard
- 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.

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[5]Details on the student log system at UCL, including separate guides for students and supervisors, can be found at https://researchlog.grad.ucl.ac.uk

- 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 for a PhD (or four to seven years part time research for a DBA) at the international level.

- 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.

Quality development
- The thesis can be written in a language enabling adequate supervision and assessment. A thesis written directly in English will foster international visibility and increase the likelihood of rapid quality publication. If the thesis is written in English, it should be complemented by an abstract in the local language.

- It is the responsibility of the institution and/or of the DS to ensure that all Doctoral theses are made available in an easy format such as pdf – ideally in a direct manner through the institutional website.

- Joint work between the supervisor and the candidate should be encouraged and in particular, before or after the completion of the thesis, it may be useful for the candidate to co-publish with her/his supervisor. This would increase career opportunities for early stage researchers and enhance the visibility of research for the home institution.

VII. Assessment

Basic standard
- 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 (see also section 6 above) 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 DS or any equivalent administration of the program for future reference and quality assurance purposes.

Quality development
- A Thesis Committee where at least one of the members comes from a foreign institution will increase the international visibility of the research project and of the candidate, enhancing as a consequence his/her chances on the job market.

- Preferably, the oral defense should be 'open' to the public.

- The thesis should be evaluated based on the following criteria:
    - Theoretical foundation (based on a relevant literature review)
    - Advanced originality (uniqueness of ideas)
    - 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

APPENDIX 1
Code of Research Conduct – Association for Information Systems
http://start.aisnet.org/?Code of Research

CATEGORY ONE: must ALWAYS be adhered to.

- Do not plagiarize.
- Do not fabricate or falsify data, research procedures, or data analysis.

CATEGORY TWO: Codes in this category are "recommended ethical behaviour".

- Respect the rights of research subjects, particularly their rights to information privacy, and to being informed about the nature of the research and the types of activities in which they will be asked to engage.
- Do not make misrepresentations to editors and conference program chairs about the originality of papers you submit to them.
- Do not abuse the authority and responsibility you have been given as an editor, reviewer or supervisor, and ensure that personal relationships do not interfere with your judgment.
- Declare any material conflict of interest that might interfere with your ability to be objective and impartial when reviewing submissions, grant applications, software, or undertaking work from outside sources.
- Do not take or use published data of others without acknowledgement, or unpublished data without both permission and acknowledgement.
- Acknowledge the substantive contributions of all research participants, whether colleagues or candidates, according to their intellectual contribution.
- Do not use other people's unpublished writings, information, ideas, concepts or data that you may see as a result of processes such as peer review without permission of the author.
- Use archival material only in accordance with the rules of the archival source.

ADVICE: The following suggestions are provided on how to protect yourself from authorship disputes, mis-steps, mistakes, and even legal action.

- Keep the documentation and data necessary to validate your original authorship for each scholarly work with which you are connected.
- Do not republish old ideas of your own as if they were a new intellectual contribution.
- Settle data set ownership issues before data compilation.
- Consult appropriate colleagues if in doubt.