CHARTER PHD SUPERVISOR – PHD CANDIDATE

This charter describes the roles and responsibilities of (co)supervisors and PhD candidates. It can be considered a declaration of intent, to be endorsed and implemented by both parties. In addition, it can be used as a tool to discuss mutual expectations, both at the start of the PhD and throughout, with the joint goal of finishing the PhD successfully and within the postulated time period.

Both a good (co)supervisor and a good PhD candidate also respect the PhD regulations and the ethical code of conduct ('*integriteitscharter'*) of Hasselt University.

Profile of a good PhD supervisor

- **Scientific expertise:**

  A good supervisor …

  – is an active researcher at a high academic level;
  – works in an area sufficiently attuned to the specific research topic of the PhD candidate;
  – warrants the quality of the PhD candidate's research plans.

- **Good working relationship with the PhD candidate:**

  A good supervisor …

  – provides encouragement, support and guidance at all stages of the PhD, and discusses with the PhD candidate which type of guidance and feedback is most helpful;
  – reserves enough time for coaching, at regular intervals;
  – is attentive to social and personal aspects;
  – shows respect for the work done by the PhD candidate, including giving him/her the chance of first authorship[1] on publications that result from the PhD candidate's work.

- **Coordinating role:**

  A good supervisor …

  – provides the necessary infrastructure and resources for the PhD project;
  – helps to place the research of the PhD candidate in a broader context and ensures that the PhD project fits within the research strategy of the group;
  – oversees both the intellectual and material environment of the PhD candidate, guarding his/her integration within the research group;
  – helps the PhD candidate with the definition, implementation, follow-up and – if necessary – adjustment of the PhD project;
  – strongly encourages the PhD candidate to store all data of the PhD project securely and durably in a jointly accessible location (cf. the research data management policy of Hasselt University);
  – is jointly responsible for the efficient progress of the PhD, with an eye to timely finishing it;
  – acknowledges the role of the doctoral committee, maintains good relations with the various members, monitors the efficient functioning of the committee and takes action or mediates in case of problems or conflicts;
  – monitors, together with the PhD candidate, the balance between the PhD project and any other tasks.

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[1] Or only authorship, depending on the common practices within the discipline.

- **Stimulating role:**

    A good supervisor …
    - challenges the PhD candidate to think critically about his/her own and others' work;
    - creates a climate in which research integrity and honest scientific conduct are the norm;
    - introduces the PhD candidate to relevant people and events within the scientific community;
    - encourages the PhD candidate to be mobile;
    - informs the PhD candidate about funding opportunities and stimulates him/her to apply where possible;
    - encourages the PhD candidate to create output and to valorise his/her research (at the appropriate time), by means of publications, presentations, practical applications, etc.;
    - encourages the PhD candidate to attend activities benefiting the research (project), as well as activities aimed at professional or personal development (e.g. doctoral school initiatives);
    - encourages the PhD candidate to be open about further professional ambitions (be it in or outside academia), raises awareness of (academic) opportunities and provides career support where possible.

- **Evaluating role:**

    A good supervisor …
    - regularly provides feedback on the PhD candidate's performance;
    - regularly evaluates – together with the PhD candidate – the progress of the project, and takes corrective actions when necessary;
    - monitors compliance by the PhD candidate with the generally accepted standards of ethics and integrity;
    - takes suitable action in the event of problems, with attention to timely and respectful communication.

For co-supervisors, the same profile applies, though the official promoter is considered in charge.
In addition, all parties should meet regularly (if possible) and written reports of formal meetings must be shared.

A good PhD candidate ...

- **proactively manages his/her research project:**
    - explores and defines the scope and content of the PhD project, in consultation with the supervisor[2];
    - takes responsibility for the planning, implementation and follow-up of the PhD project, including analysis and interpretation of the results obtained;
    - stores all data of the PhD project securely and durably in a location jointly accessible with the supervisor (cf. the research data management policy of Hasselt University);
    - warrants the quality of the research, complying with the generally accepted standards of ethics and integrity;
    - thinks critically about his/her own and others' work;
    - takes responsibility for the efficient progress of the PhD, supported by the supervisor;
    - takes responsibility for the communication with – and reporting to – any stakeholders.

- **collaborates with the different parties involved in the project (supervisor, other researchers, students, technicians, etc.):**
    - discusses with his/her supervisor the type of guidance and feedback that is most helpful;
    - integrates in the research group and respects agreements made;
    - alerts his/her supervisor to the need for a yearly meeting with the doctoral committee;
    - reports problems or challenges relevant to the progress of the PhD as quickly as possible to the supervisor and/or other parties involved;
    - takes feedback into account;
    - seizes opportunities for networking and mobility and, where possible and appropriate, actively initiates both as well.

- **actively aims to valorise his/her research, in consultation with the supervisor:**
    - shares results with the research group and in broader academic networks;
    - helps ensure, with support from the supervisor, that research findings are published at the appropriate time and takes the lead in preparing the publication(s);
    - thinks about possible applications of the research, as well as relevance for society, and tries to put this into practice.

- **manages the balance between the PhD project and other tasks and responsibilities, supported by the supervisor.**

- **takes control of his/her career development:**
    - becomes a more autonomous researcher and takes on a more significant role within the research group as the PhD proceeds;
    - timely explores career options beyond the PhD, with awareness of the own possibilities and ambitions;
    - takes responsibility for (further) developing talents and competences by seizing opportunities for growth and participating in training/courses, including purposefully creating a tailored doctoral school programme based on personal and professional relevance.

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[2] When referring to 'the supervisor', co-supervisors are also meant.